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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

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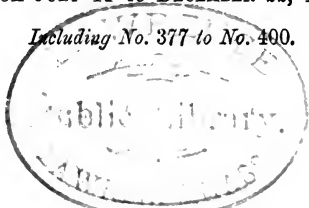
CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

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SATURDAY, JULY 14, 1866.

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THE TALE OF AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE.

IN SIX WEEKLY PORTIONS. FIRST PORTION.

CHAPTER I.

I SUPPOSE that, to be successful, one should see only one side of the object to be attained. At all events, I believe this to have been my sister Anna's case; and she succeeded, if to gain what one strives for, be success. Now that I have written those words, they scarcely seem to convey my meaning. Perhaps I should have expressed it better, if I had written—but no; let it stand as it is.

The reverse of the medal has been my stumbling-block through life. I have always allowed my imagination to busy itself too much with what might be said against, as well as for, any plan, purpose, or speech, of mine. But at this quiet twilight-time of my life, and in these pages which will not be read until the twilight shall have deepened into night, and the night—as I reverently hope—shall have brightened into the dawn of a heavenly day, I resolve to keep but one object in view, and to endeavour to attain it in all simplicity and single-mindedness. And this is my object, Lucy. I want you to know the true story of those who have gone before you, and who have nurtured your youth. The story of two women, who were once young, as you are now young; who lived, and loved, and suffered, as you must one day live, and love, and suffer. I have little hope that our warning beacon will avail to keep you from the rocks. The records of our common humanity date back ages and ages beyond the days of my youth, Lucy—though I dare say your twelve-year-old imagination can hardly conceive a time when Aunt Margaret was young!—and yet I never heard of a case in which one human being's heart-experience served to teach any but himself or herself. We are truly the "heirs of all the ages" in one sense. Science bequeathes its treasures of research and labour. Intellect stumbles, and wavers, and sometimes falls, but progresses, still progresses. The pioneers of thought do good service; and noble band after band, succeeding each other, have hewn out paths

for us, on which we travel contentedly, with scant gratitude to, or thought of, the hewers. But, in the science of Life, we must all begin for ourselves where our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers began. Just as to-morrow will bring with it the same sequence of morning, noon, and night, that dawned, and flamed, and faded, in Eden. Still, it will be well that you should one day know the truth of a family story which you are as yet too young thoroughly to understand. It will be well if it make you think gently and pitifully of the dead; if it help you to see that "nought's had, all's spent, if our desire be got without content;" and, above all, if it convince you that unless your desire be a worthy one, its attainment can assuredly never, never, bring content.

Your grandmother was my sister Anna; that sister of whom I have said that she succeeded in gaining what she strove for. You never saw her after you were an infant two years old, and I know not how I can make you picture to yourself my sister—the sister of pale, wrinkled, grey-haired Aunt Margaret—as a bright, handsome, brilliant girl, full of life, and with a wonderfully high and haughty spirit. She had dark brown eyes of my colour, but larger and brighter—eyes that flashed and sparkled, and sometimes shone with too fierce a lustre when she was excited or angry. She was somewhat shorter than I, but bore herself so erectly as to seem the taller of the two. There was a family likeness between us; but I was never a beauty, while Anna always was. We were brought up together by a guardian; for our parents died when I was five, and Anna three years old. Our father and mother were taken away by the same infectious fever within a fortnight of each other. I have been told—my remembrance of that time is too vague for me to speak of my own knowledge—that our mother died first in delirium, all unconscious of the fond and faithful hand which clasped her to the last; and that from that moment our father, who had kept up to tend and nurse her, drooped and sickened, and seemed to yield himself to death. What hurt him most, was, that she should not have recognised him at the end, nor said one word of farewell; and I think the very last words he spoke were, "Phœbe will know me when I see her, now!" They used to say I was like him. Well! Our guardian came,

and took us away from the desolate house, and we soon forgot our brief sorrow, and found a warm soft nest to dwell in, two little unfledged innocents that we were, from whom the sheltering mother-wings had taken flight so soon, for ever.

I have used the term "our guardian," for so he was truly and faithfully; but I do not mean that he was ever legally appointed so; nor, indeed, were we of importance enough to have a guardian appointed for us. We had no treasure, and needed no dragon to guard it; but God sent us a friend who, though there was nothing else to take care of, took care of *us* from pure love and compassion. He was the husband of my mother's half-sister, a woman many years older than my mother, and he had known and loved both my parents. Childless themselves, he and his wife had often begged—half in jest, half in earnest—to have one of us little ones, to rear as their own. Anna was their favourite—as she was most people's—such a pretty plump thing as she was, with great eyes, and delicate rings of dark brown hair curling over her forehead! But they would have been glad to take either of us. They have often told me that father used to say laughingly, "Wait till I die, Jim, and I'll leave you one of them in my will." Poor father! Mother was passionately eager to have a son, and had even, I believe, made a half-promise that, if ever a boy were born to her, one of us inferior creatures should be transferred to the Gable House. But I do not think that any number of brothers would have pushed us from our places in father's heart. It was hoped at first that there might be some small provision for us, when his affairs were finally wound up. No one expected that we could have much; but his practice had been a large one, and he had lived simply, and had had no selfish expenses. However, beyond the small sum obtained by the sale of the furniture and books, we had literally nothing. A country surgeon, if he be one of those good Samaritans to whom the sight of helpless suffering is the most effectual appeal that can be made, and who will not only prescribe the healing oil and cordial wine, but bestow them, if need be, is seldom rich. And my father was still young and strong when the fever felled him. He looked not for death. How many of us do expect his coming, even though the journey have been long, and the road stretch far behind us? Uncle Gough carried us home, Anna and me, in our little black frocks; and Aunt Gough kissed us, and cried over us, and took us into her heart, and filled a mother's place to us, while she lived.

I remember that, from the first, Anna was the more masterful of us two. What she desired, she desired so eagerly; what she aimed at, even in our childish days, she pursued with so blind a vehemence of passion; that weaker wills unconsciously drew aside, and ceased from offering any obstacle to her course. It was bad for Anna,

this yielding on the part of those around her. I have sometimes thought, that if our parents had lived, Anna and others might have been spared the bitter sorrows which afterwards wrecked more than one life. And yet the expression of that thought seems so like a reproach to the memory of the beloved guardians of our youth, that I cannot bear to say so. But the fault, if fault there were, lay in the excessive tenderness of Aunt and Uncle Gough. They had so resolved that the orphans should never miss the sweetness of a mother's love, should never feel, even for an instant, the chill of orphanhood and strangeness in their new home, that they shrank from the remotest semblance of harshness, and wielded their authority with a gentleness which seemed almost feeble.

CHAPTER II.

THE new home that received us was delightful in its outward aspect. It was a very old building, and the good fortune or good taste of its successive occupants had preserved it almost in its original condition. I have never, in England, seen so perfect and picturesque a specimen of an ancient dwelling-house, except in the good old town of Shrewsbury. Uncle Gough's residence was, however, situated in a quite different quarter of England, in a smiling southern county, and within twenty miles of the sea. It was, I believe, the largest, and was most certainly the noblest-looking house in the little town of Willborough, and it stood in spacious grounds of its own. The lawn and gardens and orchards extended back a considerable distance; but the front of the house was quite near enough to the main street of the town for its numerous gables to be well seen from thence above the high brick walls which surrounded it; and the great old iron entrance-gate gave to view the hall door, with its quaint overhanging porch and the stone benches within it on either side, whereon, in fine sunny weather, might often be seen a heap of children's books and toys, with, perhaps, a small straw hat or a crumpled sash, the whole zealously guarded by the tiniest, friest, uncanniest-looking black-and-tan terrier that was ever beheld. For, this great porch was Anna's favourite playing-place, and Vixen was her favourite playmate. The porch was a constant *casus belli*,—not between Anna and Aunt Gough, for the dear soul would let the child have her way when she fancied her heart was set upon littering the stone benches and pursuing her pastimes in full view of all the passers-by in the High-street. But old Stock, uncle's factotum and absolute tyrant, strongly objected to what he called the unseemliness of poor Anna's selected haunt. He was a queer wooden-looking old man, whose real business was that of a gardener, but who seemed to fancy he had a sort of vested right in every inch of Uncle Gough's territory which lay outside the thick panels of the hall door. Beyond that, into

the house itself, he never pushed his authority; but once set your foot on the broad slab of stone under the entrance-porch, and you entered the domains of King Stock; or, as we children used to call him when we came to the days of Æsop's Fables, King Stork. Certainly that long-legged monarch himself could not have been more absolute, or more superbly indifferent to the inclinations of his subjects. Stock's highest word of praise was "seemly." I have heard him call the great snowy sea of apple blossoms in the orchard, flushed by a red sunset, "a seemly sight." In the same way, if Stock pronounced any person, place, or thing, to be "unseemly," we all knew that he meant to convey a very strong expression of condemnation. I have sometimes thought he fancied the word to be scriptural, and to carry with it a weight of solemnity beyond any mere mundane or usual phrase. However that may have been, I know that he and Anna had many and many a battle about that unfortunate porch. "Why, Miss Anna," he would say, with slow utterance and wooden immovable face, "when you've got the larn"—so he called the lawn—"and the gardens, and the scrubby, and the horehard, and the medders, for to play in, take what you likes and spile what you likes, whativ'er possesses you to come and litter and mess all over this here porch, with your pictur-books and your ties (toys)? And that little scrating beast of a Vixen, that I'd rayther 'ave 'ad a dozen barn-door fowl on the gravel-drive this mornin', and the marks of her paws all over them stone benches! 'Tisn't seemly, I tell ye. Do what you likes in the house. There's more old rooms and passages in the top story nor you'd trot through on your small pettoes in a week. But in this porch you shall not be; for 'tis an unseemly thing, and there an end."

But there was by no means an end. Anna would stamp her small scarlet-shod foot (children wore red morocco shoes in those days), and would knit her delicate baby eyebrows, and would throw herself furiously on the bench beside her treasures at the least hint of an attempt to remove them; while Vixen would bark and snap, and dart forward with short spiteful leaps of defiance, and the two would be so shrill and shrewish that the fray generally ended in the child and the dog being left panting, but victorious, in possession of the field. Once only, old Stock—who never turned a hair, as the phrase goes, in these combats, but was outwardly as cool and unruffled as his small foe was flushed and dishevelled—adopted the extreme measure of lifting up the refractory one, screaming with rage, in his arms, and carrying her deliberately to my uncle in the library for instant punishment; while Vic, small of body, but great of spirit, hung on by her teeth to the calf of his leathern gaiter with all four legs off the ground at once. Ludicrous as the scene was, our kind guardians were so frightened by Anna's violence, and so unwilling to deny her the gratification of any wish, that

Stock's appeal resulted in total defeat for him, and triumph and consolation for his enemy, in the shape of an orange and a bright silver sixpence. Dear, dear Uncle Gough! How tender he was, how pitiful, how patient, with the helpless motherless children he had taken to be as his own.

From that day forth, Stock never sought to interfere with Anna's choice of a playing-place. I believe she was the only creature who, within the memory of men, had successfully fought Stock on his own territory; and it might have been expected that he would be implacable against his pigmy conqueror. But it was not so. I believe he was afterwards doubly stern in asserting his authority against all the rest of the world, and I have an indistinct remembrance of Uncle Gough's having been obliged to yield up certain celery-beds which Stock chose to disapprove of, as a peace-offering to his outraged dignity. But I do not think Stock was more harsh with Anna after her victory than before. Indeed, I used to fancy that he almost liked her the better for it. On one occasion, I ventured to tread some little way in my sister's footsteps, emboldened by the success of her rebellion; but my audacity received so prompt and severe a check as effectually quenched any rising aspiration I might have had to do battle with "King Stork," presumptuous little minion that I was! It happened in this wise. We had been racing and romping through the grounds all the morning of one bright summer day, and towards noon were thoroughly heated and weary. Nurse had carried off Anna, half cross and whole sleepy, for a nap before our early dinner. I, being two years older, and not so delicate and easily tired as my sister, was left to follow my own devices until it should be time to wash and brush me for dinner. Under these circumstances, and while still undecided how to bestow myself during the next hour, my eye caught the broad island of shadow cast by the porch on the dazzling space of yellow gravel that lay glaring in the sunshine before the house. A graceful Virginia creeper hung lightly over the entrance, and the porch looked so deep and mysterious in its blackness of shade, that I thought of a certain cave in a wood that I had been told of in some fairy tale of surpassing interest, and the idea occurred to me how delightful it would be to play at being the enchanted maiden who was kept prisoner by the wicked fairy, compelled to remain spell-bound and motionless in the cave until the handsomest prince in all the world should come and touch her with a branch of the magic linden-tree, when she was to arise and marry the prince, and live happy ever after! There was a great golden-blossomed laburnum on one side of the porch, and that would do very well for the linden-tree, and would be much prettier. So off I ran in hot haste to the "wilderness"—as our play-room was significantly christened—and returned flushed and

happy to the porch, with my doll and a white woolly lamb on wheels, whereof the uninitiated could never, at first sight, distinguish the head from the tail, much to my chagrin. Dolly was not so beautiful a work of art as your waxen baby, Lucy. She was large and clumsy, cut out of wood, with crimson-varnished cheeks, and her hair conspicuously attached to her skull by a bright tin tack in the middle of the parting; but she was very dear to my childish heart for all that, and, for a power of Protean versatility, and assumption of the most widely differing characters, I would match her against the choicest and costliest puppets of France or Germany. Well! I came back to the porch, carrying Dolly and Snowball. Snowball, the woolly lamb, was an innovation, there being no such character in the original story; but I constructed in my mind an episode showing how Snowball, in endeavouring to defend his beloved mistress, had incurred the wicked fairy's wrath, and had been condemned to share her captivity: so his presence in the cave was satisfactorily accounted for. I covered Dolly's head and shoulders with a pink silk scarf from my own neck, and immediately she became as magnificent and malignant a fairy as could be desired. Then I lay down on the cool stone bench, with my arms round Snowball's neck, and waited for Prince Goldenheart with his branch of linden.

The shade and the silence, and my morning's romp, combined to make me drowsy. I was just beginning to lose the sensation of Snowball's rough wool against my cheek, when a slow heavy step on the gravel outside startled me into wakefulness, and I sat up very quietly and peered out under the hanging screen of Virginia creeper. Of course it was old Stock. I had known his step at once. He was going towards the garden, and carried a heavy spade over his shoulder. The porch was so dark, and the outer sunlight so dazzling, that I think he would have passed by without seeing me, had it not been for poor Dolly, who, true to her present character of the malignant fairy, was the means of getting me into trouble. I had stuck her up to keep guard over us at the entrance of the cave, and the glories of her pink scarf attracted Stock's attention. "Hulloa!" said he, looking in upon me, with his gnarled brown hand shading his eyes; "why, it's you, is it, Miss Margrit?" He spoke very sternly, and stooped as if to take up Dolly. "O, would you *please* not to touch her, Stock," said I, pleading eagerly; "she is the fairy Malevola, and I am Rosabella, and nobody can come into the cave without a branch of the magic linden-tree, and—" "Oho!" growled Stock, interrupting my explanation, and ruthlessly lifting the fairy Malevola by one leg, so that she dangled helplessly upside down, with her dishevelled locks revealing her bald wooden block of a head, except just where the tin tack held them on; "Oho! you are again' to set me at

defiance now, are you, Miss Margrit? If nobody can't go into the cave, somebody shall come out on it! Ain't you ashamed to be flyin' in the faces of them as Providence has been pleased to call into that condition of life? Come along out this minute, you bad-behaved child." It so irritated me to see him slowly swinging Dolly backwards and forwards as he spoke, with her poor bald head ignominiously exposed to view, and her black curls sweeping the gravel, that I was goaded into resistance. "Give me my doll!" I cried, half astonished at my own audacity. She was no longer the fairy Malevola; there was no enchanted cave, no magic linden, no Prince Goldenheart. Ah, no. All that had vanished like a broken hubble. Stock had spoiled it all! But I clasped Snowball tightly under one arm, and held out the other for Dolly with an imperious gesture. "I WILL have her!" "Who says shall and will?" retorted Stock, with exasperating disregard of my demand. "You says shall and will, now; do you? Them ain't words for little child'en." "Dolly is mine, not yours," said I, struggling to keep down my tears, and clutching Snowball; "she is mine, my very own; and you have no right to keep her from me." "No right!" repeated Stock, aghast at this demonstration—"no right! If I was to come down so fur as to reason with a babe and suckling, I'd ask you what right you have to be a playin', and—and a strayin'—in a place where you've been forbid for to play." Here he made a full stop; but added, after an instant, and with his usual deliberation, "—or for to stray." The logic of this retort struck me more forcibly than any mere scolding could have done. It was true I had been forbidden to bring my toys into the porch; but, next minute, there came into my mind the remembrance of Anna's victory, and I felt Stock's argument to be unsound. "Anna," said I, eagerly, "Anna was let to come here yesterday, and she cut the gravel with her skipping-rope; and if she has a right to be here, so have I." Stock turned his deep-set black eyes full upon me, and looked at me piercingly for a second or two. "Miss Margrit," said he, at last, "don't you arguey. Argueyment ain't meant for women folks, much more babes and sucklings. No good didn't never come on it. What they've got to do, is, just to mind what's said to them, and do it. That's the law and the prophets. You come out of that porch this minute, or I'll spile this here wooden image for good an' all." He lifted his heavy spade, and made as though he would have cut Dolly in two with it. I do not believe now that he would really have done so, for, though a harsh and crabbed old man, he was not brutal. But my childish heart leaped with terror when I saw the murderous weapon suspended over the smiling and unconscious Dolly; and, with a scream, I darted forth, caught the doll in my arms, and rushed away across the lawn at the back of the house, never stopping until I had plunged into

the thickest part of the shrubbery, where I flung myself sobbing on the grass, and hugged my rescued treasure.

More than sixty years have passed since that day when I so unsuccessfully emulated Anna—for I cannot have been much over seven years old—and yet every incident of it is far more vividly present to my mind than when I was five-and-twenty. I can recal the bitter pungent taste of a spiky leaf from the old cedar-tree under which I lay; and the half-unconscious way in which I put it between my teeth, and pricked my lips with its sharp point. Ah, Lucy! Since that day I have dreamed day-dreams in other enchanted caves, and have been bound by stronger spells than the fairy Malevola's, and I have waited for Prince Goldenheart, as you will wait for him some day; and instead of the handsomest youth in all the world, with a fragrant green bough in his hand, there has hobbled up old Stock with his spade, to crumble the whole beautiful vision into dust! But then too, Lucy, I have never had the warmth of love and pity, and sympathy with suffering, quenched out of my heart, and, after all, I ought to be a happy old woman. And so I am, my dear. So I am.

We were happy in those days, if ever children were happy. As time went on, and we ceased to be mere babies, we were not allowed to run wild about the grounds from morning to night. But such tasks as were set us had no terrors, and few difficulties. I fear that you of the rising generation will have but a mean opinion of Aunt Gough's educational powers, when I confess that I was turned eight years old, before I could read with ease. But I had already worked several samplers, and could even stitch a shirt very creditably by that time. Anna's education began somewhat earlier, as was natural; for the two years' difference between our ages, enabled me to help her at first, in deciphering the mysteries of Great A and little b. Aunt Gough was a staunch church-woman. Every Sunday morning we were taken to the great family pew, and were perched up side by side on two crimson hassocks placed on the seat; and thus elevated, the brim of my hat just reached to the top of the pew. Anna, being smaller, was altogether invisible to the outside world, except when she stood up on her cushion during the psalms. There are scarcely any pews now-a-days. Everybody sits on a hard bench in full view of his or her neighbours. As it is certainly a much more uncomfortable state of things than the old fashion, let us hope it has some compensating spiritual advantages.

Anna and I liked going to church. It was not made terrible to our young imaginations, nor were we taught to think of religion as of a stern Medusa, whose contemplation turns the gazer into stone. As to giving us any portion of the Scriptures to learn by way of punishment, Aunt Gough would have been shocked at the notion of

such a thing. She did, indeed, consider it her duty to make us learn the Church Catechism,—which we didn't understand; and she told us stories from the New Testament—which we did understand, and, moreover, delighted in. One great source of Sunday pleasure was the music. Our church possessed a very fine old organ; and though our organist would not be considered very scientific in these days, he contrived to elicit from it its mellowest tones and richest harmonies. He loved the grand old instrument, and thought more of his organ than of himself: which feeling—the self-forgetfulness of a true artist—communicated itself irresistibly to his hearers. Even we children were conscious of a beauty in the psalms and voluntaries, beyond the mere sound. And I remember once saying to our guardian, “I do like to listen to Mr. Dixon, he plays so kindly.”

As we grew older, and were thought to have got beyond the range of dear Aunt Gough's simple teaching, we were sent to a day-school in the town. Our schoolmistress, Miss Wokenham, was one of the tiniest women I ever saw. There was more than one child of eleven or twelve years old, in the school, who could look down on her from a superior height; and our plump rosy cheeks, and round arms, would seem quite coarse and clumsy—*rustic* as her phrase was then, for everything redolent of health and vigour, as well as for what was in itself rough and unpolished—beside Miss Wokenham's fragile elfish form. She was not old as I now reckon age—perhaps forty-five—but her antiquity was very venerable in my eyes then. Her hair was snowy white, but soft and shining, and wavy with natural curls; she had bright dark eyes, and an immensely wide mouth, filled, however, with a faultless set of teeth. Perhaps Miss Wokenham's attainments were really nothing very marvellous, but we all thought her a prodigy of learning. And, indeed, making all due allowance for the march of intellect in these days, I am inclined to believe that Miss Wokenham was mistress of some solid acquirements that one might seek for, vainly, among more showily accomplished governesses. She had a competent knowledge of history and geography, and a turn for arithmetic that was quite surprising; she had even, it was whispered, dabbled a little in the mathematics; and our parish clergyman, who had graduated at Cambridge, was wont to declare, that if Miss Wokenham had been a man, she would have made the wranglers of her year look to their laurels. But perhaps this was a figure of speech. At all events, Miss Wokenham herself used to declare it was; and she was a most absolutely and uncompromisingly truthful human being. If, as sometimes happened, a scholar thirsting for knowledge pushed her beyond her depth, she never hesitated for an instant to confess her ignorance. “I don't know, my dear,” she would say, fixing her brave black eyes earnestly on the interrogator: “I don't

know, but if it is to be known, we'll find it out." And then she would reach down the lexicon, or the atlas, or whatever book of reference might be needed, and work side by side with her pupil, until the desired information was gained. This candour, far from weakening her influence over us, had so diametrically opposite an effect, that we were one and all ready to swear to the positive certainty of anything imparted to us by Miss Wokenham as a fact.

Under her tuition I and Anna were well content to remain, until we were respectively seventeen and fifteen years old, with no more brilliant accomplishments than as much music as enabled us to rattle through a country dance or so, and a smattering of French imparted by a long-suffering Frenchman named De Beauguet, whom we persisted in irreverently styling Old Bogie. Anna had a lovely fresh voice, and used to thrill all our hearts with some old Border ballad, or a canzonet by Mr. Haydn, as we sat round the fire in the winter twilight. I sang too a little, but my voice had neither the power nor the charm of Anna's.

Meanwhile, things went on pleasantly and peacefully at the Gable House. If time began to streak Uncle Gough's hair with snow, and to deepen a line here and there in my aunt's comely face, the change was so gradual that we did not notice it. Perhaps old Stock altered as little as it was possible for any one to do, during a lapse of ten years. He had always seemed old since we had known him, so that was nothing new. He had always been brown-skinned, and stooping, and wrinkled, and crabbed, and he was so still; so *that* was nothing new. Poor old Stock! He seemed to have but one pleasure in life, unless his constant quarrels with every one around him afforded him gratification. His sole luxury was his pipe. He would sit by the kitchen fire of an evening, smoking his churchwarden filled with the strongest tobacco that could be bought, and talking theology to the maids; for Stock had decided views about religion. I used to think, when I was a child, that they were quite peculiar to himself; but I have heard in subsequent years dogmas gravely promulgated, which, barring the difference of grammar, might have emanated from old Stock himself.

Cook was the only one of the servants bold enough to tackle Stock on this, his strong point; but even she frequently retired worsted from the conflict. "Well," she would say, taking refuge in generalities: "I'm sure I don't know, Mr. Stock, but I've allays believed as them as acted accordin' to their consciences was in the right way. There's more nor one road to heaven, you know."

"Heaven!" Stock would repeat, with a growl of contempt. "Much *you* knows about heaven!"

"Deary me, bless us and save us, Mr. Stock! I hopes I knows as much about heaven as you do, any way."

"I'm one of the 'lect, I am," the old man would say: his face wooden as ever, and his utter-

ance deliberate and weighty as with a sense of absolute conviction: "I'm all right. There'll be me and one or two more on us there, but there'll be verry few on us—*verry* few on us."

I remember the curious speculations this kind of talk used to excite in my mind. I never for a moment believed that Stock was right, but I used to wonder with the vague curiosity of a thoughtful child how he would feel when he found so many more people in heaven than he expected, and whether he would be pleased or disappointed at not finding it reserved for the exclusive occupation of himself and "one or two more on us."

A FRENCH OFFICER ON THE ENGLISH ARMY.

HAVING now brought my prolonged sojourn in England to an end, I write in Paris the results of my private inspection, as I shall call it, of the English army: a force of which we Frenchmen in general understand very little. Before entering into details, let me bear witness to the great kindness and unvaried hospitality I received everywhere in the United Kingdom from every military man I met with. We Frenchmen often say, and still more generally believe, that Englishmen are haughty, supercilious, and utterly careless respecting the opinions of strangers. My experience teaches me exactly the reverse. If I were to note down half the acts of kindness I received from officers of the English army during my residence in their country, I might fill this space twice over, and yet leave much untold; and if I had remained to eat a third of the dinners to which I was invited, I must have remained at least a year longer from France, instead of the few months I passed in English garrison towns. It is true that I carried with me several very good letters of introduction, but the kindness shown me seemed always shown because I was a Frenchman and an officer of the French army. Moreover, whenever I mixed with English officers—and that more particularly among the seniors, the true John Bulls as we should call them in Paris—the conversation was invariably, though with great delicacy, and as if by accident, led into some channel which brought about praise of the French army, from my hosts. The way we fought in the Crimea, our sufferings and conquests in Algeria, the results of our campaigns in Italy, were almost invariably introduced for the evident purpose of giving me pleasure. Neither at the table of the "Guides,"* nor in a barrack of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, would the praises of our army be more eloquently—though calmly and earnestly—sounded than at the mess-tables of English regiments where I have dined.

In France we have an idea that English

* A "crack" French Hussar corps so called, and belonging to the Imperial Guard.

officers drink a great deal, and that they seldom leave the table quite sober. This may possibly have been the case in the times when hard drinking was the fashion among all ranks, but it is not so now. I never saw but one officer at a mess-table who was the least intoxicated, and this was a very young man who had that day won a large sum in betting upon some famous race.

English officers—that is, all the unmarried officers of a regiment—dine together at the same table, and the dinner is called “the mess.” The same system, with the same name, has of late years been introduced into the Imperial Guard in France; but it is by no means popular with us, and I should be sorry to see it extended in our service. In the first place, our regiments consisting of three battalions instead of one as is the case in the English army, we could hardly find accommodation for so large a body of officers, combined with the necessary comfort. Then, again, a “mess,” as it is established in the English army, with mess plate, mess furniture, mess wines, and all that is requisite for keeping up an establishment, entails considerably more expense than a plain dinner at a provincial town “pension,” or hotel. At Lyons, Marseilles, Grenoble, or Metz, my dinner and breakfast for the month never cost me more than seventy francs, or less than three pounds sterling, and this with quite enough good table wine at each meal. I have no luxury for that money, but I sit down with my brother field-officers, my brother captains, or my brother subalterns, as the case may be, and we have all we require, both in the quality and quantity of our food, and cleanliness of table arrangements. But an English mess, if an officer breakfast at it, and drink even a small quantity of wine, will never cost its members less than six francs a day, or a hundred and eighty francs a month.* Then, again, in the French service there does not exist that perfect equality of rank off duty, which is the rule in the English army. In a regiment of the latter, parade, or guard mounting, or “stables” once over, the commanding officer is the only person to whom any deference is shown by the other officers. The rest call each other by their surnames or christian names, as they may or may not be familiar with one another. The prefix of “captain” or “major,” as is the case with us when addressing a superior, is seldom or never heard in an English regiment, except on duty. In the English navy it is different. In that service, off duty as well as on, the inferior officer pays great respect to his superior, and with them, as in our army, all the different ranks do not dine together.

In the English army, except in the Foot Guards when stationed in London, the officers do not lodge out of barracks, as is the case in France.

* Rather more than seven pounds, which our military readers will find to be rather an under than an over statement of the monthly mess expenses.

English officers would often hardly credit me when I told them that our largest regiments, numbering perhaps two thousand four hundred men, would never have more than an adjutant, major, and the captain and subaltern on duty inside the barrack walls, except during the hours of duty, and never during the night. Unless he happens to be a married man, of which there are never more than four or five in a regiment, no officer in the English army can lodge out of barracks, nor can he, without special leave, be absent from the barracks all night. We have an idea in France that the English officers are much less with their men, and have far less to do, than in our service; but the exact contrary is the fact. In the English army the men are constantly being inspected by their officers for something or other, and are not left to themselves nearly so much as our soldiers are. It is possible that this constant supervision may be requisite in the English army, but I am inclined to think that it makes the troops more dependent upon others in the difficulties of a campaign, and tends to diminish that self-reliance which is evident in the ranks of our army, and which has helped our men so well in many emergencies. I will give an instance of what I mean. In the French army, once the rations of the regiment have been duly inspected and pronounced to be good, there is an end of looking after the food of the men. The quality of the supplies the administration is careful of; for the cooking, the men themselves are responsible; and this has the double good effect of making the men self-dependent, and avoiding that constant inspection of them which seems to me a mistake. Now, in the English army, the quality of the rations is inspected in the morning, before the rations are delivered:—much the same as with us. Then, each meal, as it is ready and cooked, is inspected, first by the orderly corporal of the company, then by the orderly sergeant of the company, a third time by the orderly sergeant of the regiment, and when served up in the barrack-rooms the orderly captain and subaltern go round to ask and see whether the men have any complaints to make. And yet, notwithstanding all this trouble, the English soldiers are not by any means as well fed as ours. Their breakfast and supper consist of tea and bread; their dinner alone being a meat meal, while our men have a good substantial breakfast and an equally good dinner. In many English regiments it is the custom on Sunday, in addition to the several inspections I have mentioned, to have the men’s dinners inspected by the lieutenant-colonel and the majors of the corps; and it is customary, I am told, in a number of corps that the men are obliged to sit down to their dinner buttoned up in uniform. Imagine what our soldiers, who when off duty never see any one of higher rank than the corporal of their room, would say to this constant supervision!

The chief difference between the two services lies, as I believe, in the fact that whereas

in the English army a corporal is considered as requiring education and intelligence but little better than a private, with us no soldier is made corporal until he has undergone an examination which proves him fit for any command. Let a corporal with us but behave himself well, and his promotion to the epaulet of a sub-lieutenant is but a question of time. Not so in the English army. There, a soldier may make an excellent corporal, and not be fit for the rank of sergeant; or he may do exceedingly well as a sergeant, and not be suited for a sergeant-major; or he may make a first-rate sergeant-major, and not be capable of commanding men as an officer. I saw an instance of this. I went to the inspection of a splendid hussar regiment at Colchester. The corps was about to embark for India; and the Prince of Wales, besides a great number of the élite of London society, came down to see it on parade for the last time in England for many years to come. When the manœuvres were over, a sergeant and a sergeant-major were called before the Prince, to receive medals of distinction, for good conduct. Both were perfect models of cavalry soldiers, as indeed was every hussar of that magnificent corps. One of these two soldiers, the sergeant, was noted as having been orderly to Lord Raglan in the Crimea, and as riding the same horse that had carried him through the Russian war. Now, it is twelve years since Lord Raglan died, and, as mere recruits are never selected for orderlies, it is but fair to conclude that this sergeant must have seen at least fifteen years' service. In our army he would have been at least a captain, and perhaps would have attained higher rank; but in the English army he was only a sergeant. Surely this very slow promotion, or rather this gulf which is seldom bridged over between the commissioned and the non-commissioned ranks, must be the source of discontent and of great reluctance on the part of many good men to serve.

Of the system by which commissions and promotions are purchased in the English army, and by which the officer who has not money is certain to be superseded by his junior who has, I hardly like to speak. It is so utterly foreign to all that we and every other army in Europe consider honourable and soldier-like (nay, it is so utterly contrary to the practice in the English navy, English artillery, English Indian army, English marine infantry, English engineers, and English marine artillery), that the only wonder is, that a right-thinking honourable nation can for a moment continue a plan so degrading and wrong. It will hardly be believed out of England, that without money no officer can be promoted in the English army, unless he may happen to succeed to a death vacancy. Thus, suppose a captain of a regiment wishes to retire from the service; if the senior lieutenant of the corps has passed the requisite examination, and can muster eleven hundred pounds (about twenty-seven thousand francs), he will get his promotion. But if he cannot raise this sum, no matter what are the examinations

he has passed, the next lieutenant on the list will get the captaincy; and if the second has not the amount, the third will get it, and so on. And in addition to these sums, which are called the "regulation prices" of commissions, large extra sums are given to induce officers to retire; so that promotion up to the rank of lieutenant-colonel is, in the English army, a mere question of money. A lieutenant-colonel of English cavalry told me that his several grades had cost him about twelve thousand pounds, or three hundred thousand francs, and that unless an officer was prepared to pay that amount for his different promotions, he must never hope to command a cavalry regiment in the English service. This system is the great bane of the English army. On the one hand, it prevents poor men (whether from the ranks of the army or from civil life) from hoping to get on in the service. On the other hand, even those who do expend these immense sums cannot often afford to remain until they are made general officers, for if they do so, all they have paid is lost. The result is, that nearly all lieutenant-colonels either retire from the service or retire upon half-pay, in order to realise, at any rate, a part of what they have paid for their commissions, and so all the military experience they have gained is lost to the State. In short, promotion is with the wealthy officers a plaything which they will pay anything to obtain; once obtained, they are obliged ere long to sell it again, as being too expensive to keep.

To us Frenchmen (who are accustomed to look upon promotion as to be gained by honourable service, by seniority, or by distinction in the field), this turning of army honours into mere shares, as it were, which are to be bought and sold, appears simply detestable. So long as it continues, I am persuaded that the English army will never be what it might be, and that no other reforms in their military system will, or can be, of much avail. Its existence is the cause of an extraordinary system of promotion called *brevet*, which takes some little time to understand, and which confused me not a little. With us, a captain is a captain and nothing more. If he be rewarded by promotion, he is made a *chef d'escadron* or a *chef de bataillon** either in his own or in another corps, as the case may be; so is he promoted in the English navy, from one rank to another. But not so in the English army. Regimental promotion, save in the exceptional cases of death vacancies, or the augmentations of a regiment, or the formation of a new corps, not in the gift of the military authorities. When an officer has to be rewarded with promotion, he gets *brevet advancement*. Thus: an officer may be only a captain in his *regiment*, but may have the *brevet rank* in the army of major, lieutenant-colonel, and even colonel. So long as he is with his

* A *chef d'escadron* in the cavalry, or a *chef de bataillon* in the infantry, corresponds with the rank of major in the English army.

regiment alone, this brevet rank does not tell; but whenever his corps is in garrison with another regiment, or part of a regiment, he has a right to assume his army rank. An English officer told me of an extraordinary anomaly of this kind which happened in India some years ago. A captain in a cavalry regiment, who, from having been mentioned in general orders when on the staff, had attained the *brevet* rank of colonel, took command, by virtue of his seniority, of a whole brigade of cavalry before the enemy: thus superseding all the field-officers of his own and of every other regiment of cavalry. When the campaign was over, he rejoined his regiment, and did duty again as a simple captain. I have myself seen in Dublin, and at the camp at Aldershot, many officers who were one day doing duty as captain with their regiments, and the next day were visiting the guards as field-officers of the day. In the French army we could hardly understand such an extraordinary anomaly, but it seems an almost indispensable evil in an army where *regimental* promotion can only be bought and sold, and is really not in the hands of the authorities to bestow. There must be some means of rewarding service, distinction, or valour, in every army. With us, it is done substantially; that is, when an officer does anything by which he can claim promotion, he is duly rewarded by real promotion.

An officer of one of the regiments at Aldershot took me over the quarters of a hussar regiment but lately returned from India. As is usual in the English cavalry, nothing could be finer or cleaner than the men and the horses, nor could anything exceed the politeness with which the officers received me. But there was pointed out to me an individual whose position in the army is a commentary on the English system of promotion. This was the senior lieutenant of the corps: a gentleman who had been thirty years in the army, had worked through all the grades from private hussar to lieutenant, had seen service in the Crimean campaign, as well as throughout the great Indian mutiny. In actual service he was senior to every officer in the regiment, including the colonel, by several years. And yet, as he had not the money wherewith to purchase the rank of captain, he had only a death-chance of promotion. In his own regiment, or in any other corps, the Queen of England herself could only promote him by making him a present of from two to three thousand pounds. I was told that this gentleman was an excellent soldier in every respect, and much liked by his brother officers. There is in England a military newspaper called the *Army and Navy Gazette*, the editor of which is a gentleman who was correspondent of the *Times* newspaper before Sebastopol. This paper is looked upon as almost semi-official on military and naval matters, and its opinion is highly respected. In its columns the abolition of this abominable purchase system is often advocated; but there is a class of officers who uphold what seems, to all other nations and

armies in Europe, a disgrace to the English uniform.

The uniforms and accoutrements of the English army have been greatly changed for the better since I saw their battalions in the Crimea. Their cavalry is now almost perfect in dress, arms, and saddlery; their artillery, both horse and foot, the same; but their infantryman is still the very worst dressed foot-soldier in Europe, without any exception, and yet, with their scarlet tunics, they might have the most showy battalions in the world. They adhere to the old-fashioned white belt which we have long discarded, and they still retain the heavy pouch, bearing all its weight across the chest. The officers dress in blue tunics, save on rare occasions; when they wear scarlet, the distinction of their rank is so difficult to perceive as to be almost impossible. In their blue tunics there is no distinction whatever of rank, except for the field-officers. This is the more singular, as I have observed that in the English navy the distinctions of rank are all marked, in both dress and undress, so plainly that no one can mistake them. The English infantry officer's scarlet tunic is in the very worst taste, with plasterings of lace about the collar, the tails, and the cuffs, which serve no possible purpose except to add to the expense. Across the chest they wear a red scarf or sash, which is as useless as it is ugly, and they also adhere to the white leather sword-belt. Then they have a third uniform: a scarlet jacket, worn open, with a waistcoat, which is the dinner costume. Surely a plain scarlet frock, with no lace but to mark rank—say on the sleeve, as in their navy—with epaulets for full dress, the red scarf abolished, a black sword-belt for undress, and a gold one for full dress, would be a better-looking and a more simple costume. I have always noticed that the greater variety of uniforms a soldier has the more certain he is to be more or less shabby. An old coat and a new one, both of the same make and pattern, are sufficient. An officer may certainly have such additions as epaulets, gold lace, belt, and so forth, for greater occasions; but he should never have but one garment, and, more particularly, should always wear the same colour as his men. I saw a battalion of the Guards at drill in Hyde Park. The men wore undress jackets of white cloth; the officers, blue-braided hussar-looking frock-coats. No stranger could have guessed that the officers and men belonged to the same corps.

English officers seem to dislike all uniforms in general, and scarlet uniforms in particular. I observe that on every possible occasion, the moment he is off duty, the first thing an English officer does, is, to divest himself of his uniform, and to put on—often very curious-looking—plain clothes. To wear these plain clothes, even officers of rank will risk being reprimanded by their superiors. The difference of a general officer, or the colonel of a regiment, being liked or disliked, is very often determined by the fact of his allowing plain clothes to be worn,

or otherwise, by those under his command. This is a very singular fact; and is all the more curious, inasmuch as young men will move heaven and earth to obtain nominations to the army, and will afterwards avoid as much as they possibly can ever showing themselves in public in the distinctive dress of their profession. To hear an English officer talk about the annoyance of having to wear his full dress (the scarlet tunic) for a few hours, you would imagine that this full dress consisted of a heavy suit of ancient armour. In the main, English officers perform their duty strictly and well; but their uniform they dislike and avoid.

The soldiers and non-commissioned officers in the cavalry are well dressed, but the infantry are not. They still wear the long trousers, which have been abolished in the ranks of nearly every European infantry. And yet, curious enough, the English volunteer corps wear short trousers (called knickerbockers), which, with their leather leggings, is the best marching dress I have seen. It is better than what is now worn in our infantry, for it is not so heavy, and is much easier to put on.

In France we have an idea that in the English army the soldiers are tyrannised over by their officers. This is a great mistake. It is true that one seldom, if ever—I should perhaps say never—sees an English officer talking with a soldier or non-commissioned officer, as is often the case in our army. The customs and rules of their service forbid it, and in their ranks there are seldom to be found private soldiers of the same social standing in civil life as themselves. This is not the case with us. I have known many instances where one brother would be a lieutenant or a captain, and the other a private, or corporal, or sergeant, in the same corps. In England this would never be. But still there is a very great deal of good feeling, and even of liking, between the different ranks; and the officers spend freely, from their own pockets, considerable sums for the amusements of the men.

There is one thing which I greatly admire in the English army, and that is the readiness with which their troops embark for long years of colonial service. Our men would go singing to an attack at which two-thirds of their number must in all probability be swept away by the enemy's cannon; but they never would go for ten or twelve years to India, the Cape of Good Hope, or New Zealand, as the English soldier does, without a murmur. The regiment of hussars which I saw the Prince of Wales review at Colchester, had among its officers several men of large fortune, and yet, although they might have exchanged into other corps remaining at home, they were all about to embark in a body for India, where, as I was told, they would have to do duty for ten years. A French regiment would have done this gladly, if there had been any prospect of active service, or promotion, or glory, but they would never have done it merely from a stern sense of duty. This is but another instance serving to show

what a very fine army might be made of British troops, if a few wholesome changes were introduced into their system.

MASKS, FACES, AND BLANKS.

DID any one ever see a real human face? I who ask this question am not a maniac; neither am I blinder than my neighbours—indeed not so blind as some who persist in taking scarecrows for heroes, and a bundle of rags for royal robes of the deepest purple; but though not insane and not blind, I affirm in sober earnestness that faces are not to be seen as an everyday sight in this world, and that what we do see are for the most part masks, when they are not blanks.

Is it a face, do you think, that you look at, when Old Velvetpaws shakes you cordially by the hand, and congratulates you on your success in obtaining that appointment which he has been straining every nerve to secure for his youngest son—as yet found eligible for nothing? Old Velvetpaws has the biggest and brightest black eyes in the world—a pair of lips that seem to travel up to the very roots of his hair, so mobile, so expressive, so rich in play of line and facility of muscle as they are, and a smile that affects even the tips of his ears, it is so general and so expansive—he shows a row of small, white, even teeth when he laughs, and he laughs long, loud, and often—but, bless your heart! Velvetpaws, though looking all face, never showed his true physiognomy to living man since he was a youngster at school, and got a caning for telling the master he was a muf. That was a lesson on the value of not saying all he thought which Velvetpaws never forgot; and from that day he began the manufacture of the mask which, with him, does duty for a human face. For what you see is only a bit of gutta percha, say, moulded into the likeness of a jolly, cheery-natured man full of the milk of human kindness with a grand heading of cream, and whose heart is an engine working by centrifugal force—flying outwards in general love for the whole family of man. Velvetpaws wears for his mask unselfishness and universal love: love so universal, and unselfishness so entire, that he can even congratulate a successful rival who has carried it over his son, while fingering a handful of that same son's I O Us in his pocket, which he himself will have to pay if Whitecross-street is to be shunned. But the real face underneath wears as its signs the pallid cheek of disappointment, the swollen brow of anger, the fiery eyes of hate, and the lifted lip of envy; and when he says, "My dear boy, I am so very glad of your success! so deucedly well deserved!" as he presses your hand with quite paternal cordiality, adding, "Come and take your chop with us to-morrow; my wife and the girls will be enchanted to see you," he has simply drawn on a mask, and is speaking through the metal mouthpiece.

If you accept his invitation and go to the

Humble Retreat, as it pleases him to call the most luxurious, cozy, elegant, and perfectly appointed mansion of small dimensions to be found in all Brompton, you will find more masks and one blank. Mrs. Velvetpaws and the elder two Miss Velvetpaws will wear the masks—the one cut into the likeness of a soft, maternal, purring tabby, the other of two joyous, frisking, not to say infantile, kittens; but Miss Evelina Amanda will have a blank. Years ago—very many years ago, for the Misses Velvetpaws, though wearing their kittenish masks, are well on in the dreary vale of old maidenhood—you were unutterably sweet on Miss Evelina Amanda. You were then a raw youth from school, and Miss Evelina constituted herself your social mamma, and undertook to polish you up to the proper degree of brilliancy; and naturally you were grateful in the way of gratitude most affected by young men with budding whiskers, and thought Miss Evelina Amanda's raven tresses and coal-black eyes the loveliest things to be seen this side of Paradise. And you told her so—being a foolish young owl—and offered to make them your own when time and the income-tax allowed; eager to put a millstone round your neck and gves upon your wrists, as are so many young owls in their first blinking flights through the dazzling world of womanly seduction. But papa and mamma, though not averse to substantial settlements, had a wholesome horror of vague prospects; and as your share in the world's inheritance at that time was nothing better than what could be got out of hope, youth, a clear brain, an honest heart, and cleanly fingers, they shook their heads—by no means harshly, but by no means falteringly—and Miss Evelina Amanda Velvetpaws was forbidden to your arms. Since then the wheel of fortune has turned up a few more spokes, and all with progressively thick coatings of fine red gold to your side. Steadily and surely you have risen step by step and round by round, till now, there is not a father in all your set, nor a mother, nor a daughter, who would not think the offer of your hand a piece of good luck worth praying for. And so old Velvetpaws invites you to the Humble Retreat, where you see Miss Evelina Amanda again. Where you see a blank rather, in the guise of a human face.

Time, which has been such a fairy godmother to you, has been a crabbed old witch to Evelina. The glossy tresses are still there, to be sure, and the coal-black eyes to match, but the grace, the aroma, the aureole of the past have gone, never to return! And you, being now a full-grown owl, with eyes as sharp as a hawk's, see for the first time the full pattern, of the millstone you had once been so anxious to hang round your neck; and you, too, draw on a mask when you turn your face radiantly on old Velvetpaws and the maternal tabby purring softly by his side; for they think you are, mayhap, restored to them, while you are thanking them dumbly for the happy escape they formerly provided for you. Just so much of sentimental constancy have you had, that you would not

speak the decisive word to little Susan May up there at Bayswater, until you had seen Miss Evelina Amanda again. Old memories are very sweet, and young delusions very lovely, and you did not know what stirring of the heart might not be awakened at the sight of the old love, once more like a goddess in your eyes than a mortal woman who added up the washing-book and ate brown bread for her digestion. But all passed finally, and for the last time, when you met her there again; for even old memories and young delusions cannot survive the death which lies in the blank. Hope, love, youth, enthusiasm, the tenderness which softens, the passion which inflames—all, all have gone—washed out in the bitter waters of disappointment—rubbed away by the terrible attrition of the world. The heart of her is dried up and can never blossom afresh, though she offers you cambric flowers on wire stalks, and would fain have you believe them the daisies and wild-flowers of spring; and her soul has narrowed and narrowed in her hardening worship of Mammon, till no image but that of gold can find reflection there, for all that she flashes a bit of broken looking-glass before you, which she wants you to accept as the divine light illumining her. Ah, poor creature! cambric flowers on wire stalks, and bits of broken looking-glasses flashing back the flare of a will-o'-the-wisp, are but poor substitutes for the blooming of the tender heart, and the light of the loving soul; and a blank—a dead hopeless wall of flesh with eyes like curtained windows, and lips which open into a dead fosse—is but a dreary make-believe for a living human face, changeful and faithful, rich, rapid, eager, and true, as the living human face should be!

The next day little Susan May up at Bayswater learnt, though she did not understand, the result of your visit to the Humble Retreat, and what effect four masks and a blank had wrought in your heart. But then little Susan is one of those rare blessed who have a face; and even when she tries to manufacture for herself a mask, can never get beyond a veil of gauze or thinner lace, which it does not require a double-acting bull's-eye to see through. And to this quality, not of universal possession, she owes the best husband that ever wife adored.

All the passions wear at times stout clay masks defying scrutiny; but the two most difficult to hide are love and anger. Hatred, jealousy, envy, malice, avarice, and even some others of thicker blood and moister palms, can creep behind their masks and double-knot the thongs. But love and anger are hard to constrain, and fight desperately against disguises. And even when every other feature has been pinched and pushed inside the mask, the eyes still rebel, and the living fire which flashes from them tears the whole of the flimsy pretence to tatters, or grinds the stony make-believe to powder. A host of mask-makers crowd round, attempting to overpower that turbulent Love struggling to get loose. On one side Prudence, on the other perhaps Honour—two giants in the world of motives—

hold his hands, while fitting on the mask of indifference and sharpening the gag of silence. They think they have him safe. Bound hand and foot, dumb-lipped and stony-eyed, he lies in sobbing captivity between them; and Prudence draws her mantle close round her, and Honour turns his diamond star full into the sunlight, and they whisper to each other congratulations on their victory, and dispose of the fate of the conquered thing between them. Just for a moment these pæans softly whispered across the body of Love masked, bound, and sobbing—just for a moment of rest and silence—then up with the cry, off with the mask, away with the bonds—free, unbound, eloquent, and confessed, stands Love; and Prudence and Honour go shivering and beaten into the waste beyond the garden. Love! Love! Love! who has ever bound him? whose mask has ever hidden the glowing splendour of his face? Prudence and Honour have sometimes overthrown him in his tenderest years; Jealousy has transformed him to the likeness of Hate; he has lain as if dead under the wounds of Coldness; Inconstancy has bound his mouth with shame; and Death has plucked the roses from his cheeks and the kisses from his lips; but not one of them all has ever yet been his victor when he has come to his full strength, and even Death has not dragged him to annihilation!

Very frail for the most part are the masks of love; a breath blows them away and a tear dissolves them into nothingness, they fall off at the faintest touch of a tender hand, and are transparent to all but the eyes of the beloved. But to him by some strange glamour of the fancy the flimsiest veil that can be worn becomes as impenetrable as a six-inch plank, and a hollow mask, loose and slipping aside at every turn, with the eyes of Love gleaming through like stars on a winter's night, is as firmly fixed as the eternal tomb—as desolate, as dark, and as empty. Many are the masks which maidenly shyness, and many those which womanly reserve, fashion for love. The most general pattern is that of indifference, which often gets itself accepted when it fain would be refused, and which sometimes puts its wearer to the embarrassment of unmasking of her own free will, if she would not be left for ever under her disguise. Then there is the mask of petulance which is a kind of baby anger; and the mask of jealousy which simulates every other passion under heaven; and the mask of coquetry which now is burning hot and now ashen cold, leaving the poor beholder in bewilderment as to which is the true complexion after all, and what the real reading of the erotic thermometer. But still and always, though every one else can see through the disguise, the Beloved is stone blind; and the mask, whatever it may be, holds good for the true face beneath.

Which do you see, a face or a mask, when your friend tells you he is glad to see you—oh! very glad indeed! smiling floridly and speaking heartily, when all the while wishing you at the bottom of the Red Sea? The thing you look

at has the semblance of a face; there are the eyes, nose, and mouth, the skin and the hair generally held integral to that part of the person; but for all truth of meaning, the face of your friend smiling floridly is a mere mask showing nothing. How many people indeed show their true faces in society? The warm hand press would often, if truthfully translated, mean a dagger-stab; the glancing eyes would shoot forth poisoned arrows; the radiant smile would be a crisped-up sneer; the cordial welcome a growl of forbidding. The mask of polite needs and conventional smoothness hides the most wonderful unlikeness in the face beneath. Yet if it were not so, we should be all at fighting distance from each other, taking aim with bullets, not sugar-comfits, at each other's heads. Depend upon it, the manufacture of passable masks is the secret work of almost every one's life; and not what shall be shown, but what can be concealed, the problem afflicting most souls. I grant the value of this masking under many conditions. All needless anger, all narrow spite, all silly prejudice, all enmity, malevolence, annoyance, and contempt, all the range of hostile feelings are always better for being tight-masked and impenetrably veiled; but I never have understood why the gentler emotions, and the joyous, should be concealed; and why we should not be allowed to live with open faces, when we have nothing but love and pleasure to show. We are so desperately afraid of "committing ourselves," as we call it, when we go about the world unmasked; and I should like to know what great harm there would be in this self-committal, and how it is that a mask which does not speak the truth should be so much more considered than a face which does. The enigmas which rule human society, without ever a key to unlock their hidden meaning, are manifold; but is there, honestly, one more puzzling than the regard attached to masks, and the disrepute into which faces have fallen?

What a mask the unhappy wife is forced for prudence and self-respect to wear over that poor tear-dewen face of hers! If she does not wear it, and if she lets the tears fall down in the sight of all, burning ploughshares will not be too hot for her feet to walk on, and she must carry live coals from the world's altar, though they scorch her trembling fingers to the bone. Full of sympathy as the world is for her sorrows if only delicately indicated—lifting a mere corner of the veil daintily—it has neither sympathy nor respect if broadly shown, and rung into its ears through a six-foot speaking-trumpet. The mask of the ill-mated spouse, male or female, must be of peculiar manufacture and most careful manipulation; the kind more usually adopted, because most generally approved of, being one embodying a gentle patience—a plaintive manner of martyrdom—Saint Cecilia exhaling her soul in mournful music—Saint Sebastian lying speechless under the cruel arrows piercing his heart. By no means a sturdy denial of pain, but the confession of it

made with sweetness and submission, and a mask that says, "I do not complain," while showing you the whole facts of the case in a hand-glass. This is a wonderfully effective manner of masking conjugal distress, and I recommend it to the notice of all who wish to be canonised before death, for social saintship undeniable by the most envious. Those who wear no masks, and tell out their griefs in good round English without mouthpieces, will meet with no pity however great their sufferings, but will at once enlist the world against them, and be for ever irremediably in the wrong. This is one of the cases in which society demands a mask. However flimsy, however transparent, it must be worn; the more gracefully the better for the wearer—but gracefully or clumsily—still worn.

Poverty, too, is another condition that thinks itself obliged to mask as closely as any fine lady of olden times. I do not know why that should be, but it is so; and "keeping up appearances" is the first commandment of social religion. This is all very well, if people are content to mask their poverty in what may pass as decent sufficiency, no more; I can understand the pride which demands that as its right; but when they take to spangled veils, and plaster casts painted to look like marble, then I think them contemptible enough; and for my own part would prefer to show my true face with all its pinched distress, rather than this hollow make-believe which puffs out its cheeks with wind to look like the fat of food. That mask worn over the face of poverty is a terrible burden to the wasted muscles it constrains. Think how we have to smile and smile, and utter sweet platitudes sweet only to a free heart, but more bitter than gall and wormwood to the oppressed, and take an interest in small midge-bites—expressing the deepest sympathy for that last disastrous pinprick which actually went through the skin, when all the while a monstrous Anaconda is twining its folds closer and closer round us, and the deadly asp of ruin is stinging nearer to the heart of us, and our final destruction is every day more inevitable. That bill which must be met to-morrow—gracious powers! and not a penny to meet it with, and the holder himself a poor man, or an inexorable—that man in possession left smoking, and drinking good beer in the kitchen, with Molly the cook fraternising dangerously on the matter of the best cut of beef—that writ so sure to be out—the bill of sale so sure to be enforced—with these coils of the Anaconda crushing in our ribs, we go to my Lady Littlecare's, and console with her on the death of her canary, or echo her indignant disappointment about the dear duchess's ball—the grand ball of the season—where she had set her heart on being present, but was prevented by my Lord Littlecare's whimsy for the gout and her society that evening. Or, without a week's provision in your pocket, your friend in the country writes up to you to spend some twenty or thirty pounds for him in a knick-knack, which he will repay you by cheque when he knows the exact

amount. I know the embarrassment and mortification of that as well as most, and have been put to unheard-of straits and shame either by having to spend my last sixpence on my friend's whim, or being obliged to confess that I had not as many shillings as I was required to advance pounds. Or young Presto, the popular author, invites you to a champagne supper to celebrate the success of his new novel, which—perhaps it is mere bile and disappointment that makes you say, is mere trash—trash, sir, and waste paper, compared to that grand epic of your own, rejected now by every publisher in London; but on the acceptance of which you had cast your best bower anchor, and are now drifting away hopelessly into the great ocean of despair and destitution. Or, being a woman and a mother, and oppressed with the sad lack of your pretty Julia at home, wanting even essentials, and unable to take her pleasure with her friends on account of that lack, you have to listen to Miss Lustre's complaints of her milliner, the horrid creature! who has trimmed her new velvet with a lace just half an inch too narrow, and who is thenceforth and for ever excluded from all benefit in the Christian dispensation. Your pretty Julia in her worn boots and faded cottons would have been made rich with the cost of just that trimming of despised lace; but you smother all this, and pulling on your mask gallantly, sigh and console in full accord; and with the pressure of absolute need at home, agree with Miss Lustre that Valenciennes half an inch too narrow is an infliction intolerable to human nature, and that a milliner who could be guilty of such a misdemeanor is a serpent, and by no means to be patronised by sympathetic friends. I take it that Miss Lustre would not much admire the face, could she see it for a moment from behind the mask! Ah, my dear rich relations! how little you know of the true face of poverty! how wonderfully blind to all its masks save that odious one of pretence! But this, which the framers and wearers always think impenetrable, never yet deceived more than the merest tyro, and is sure to be discerned for what it is—the most pitiful make-believe in the whole mask manufactory!

But masks are more endurable than blanks. A mask at least presupposes life and activity, and if substitution is still substitution of something for something, a blank is a mere negative meaning nothing, if it be not death. A long course of worldliness creates a blank where was once a face; the slight misfortune of being born without a heart, or with too much water in the blood, or with brains but poorly folded, also trowels out blanks where faces should have been; selfishness makes a dead blank with an ugly crusting of the plaster; so, often, does a severe disappointment; but the deadening hardening worship of Mammon, fashionable exceedingly in our time, makes the blankest blank of all! I know nothing more sad than to meet one, after long years of absence, whose sweet, frank, loving face, where every feeling spoke its honest and intelligible word, and every heart-

beat had its mirror, had once been very near, and perhaps all too dear to our heart, and to find now only a stony blank where had been so precious and eloquent a face. It is a death in life—a spiritual murder—worse than any actual death of the physical powers; and for my own part I would rather the beloved had died than have lived down into such degradation of beauty. Bad enough is it to meet this blank if only as regards ourselves—leaving still the fact of the face for others; to touch cold clay in place of the living flesh which had once throbbed and reddened beneath our hand—to look into glass balls deftly coloured, instead of the loving eyes that used to mirror back our own, and flash glory and happiness, and the light of hope, and the warmth of love into our life—to turn hopelessly towards the dear land in which had lain our Eden, and to see, instead of the roses and palm-groves of former years, nothing but a high-walled city, peopled by strange feet, and closed against us for ever. This is more bitter than death.

WHAT IS THE GOOD OF FREE-MASONRY?

EXTOLLED as the true faith; denounced as an offshoot of Satan; praised by crowned, and banned by tonsured heads; dreaded as a subtle political engine, and admired for its profound indifference to politics; the essence of goodness according to some men, and the spirit of evil if you listen to others; freemasonry is as complete a mystery to the uninitiated as when the mythical lady hid herself in the lodge clock-case, or the equally mythical American citizen was slain for tampering with its secrets. Listen to the words of wisdom, according to Brother Stodgers, P.M., and you will learn that men may be Freemasons for years without penetrating the arcana of the order; may attain divers dignities without comprehending their true import; may die in the fulness of masonic parts without having emerged from masonic babyhood; and after having spent as much time and labour on the art as would, to put it modestly, suffice for the acquisition of every European tongue, yet fall short of the supreme distinction of being “a good mason.” Whether, as the elder Mr. Weller, and the charity-boy he quotes, respectively remarked of the institutions of holy matrimony, and of getting to the end of the alphabet, it be worth while going through so much to learn so little, is, I hear the cynic whisper, entirely a matter of opinion; but that neither the labour involved nor its reward is under-estimated, the most superficial knowledge with the subject proves.

Brother Steele and myself have some right to our opinion, for we are past-masters, mark-masters, and royal arch companions—are officers of our chapters, and treasurers of our lodge. What our mutual and horsey friend Tibbins irreverently calls our “plated harness,” involves medals, jewels, and ornate ribbons for our manly

breasts, aprons for our fronts, and broad collars like those worn by knights of the Garter (but handsomer) for our necks. The Victoria Cross is an ugly excrescence compared to the costly decoration given me as a testimonial by the brethren of my mother lodge; the clasps to the jewels of some of our friends exceed in number those of the oldest Peninsular veteran, and we calculate that we might now be Sanskrit scholars of some eminence had we thought fit to serve that language as faithfully as we have served the craft. Upon sordid money considerations we scorn to dwell. Initiation fees, exaltation fees, fees for advancement, emergencies, subscriptions to charities, to lodges, and for special purposes, make up a pretty sum to look back upon; and if the upshot of it all were but the amusement and gratification derived, I am not prepared to say that we have had full value for our money. Joyous evenings, periodical feasts (in which something else flows besides soul), mutual compliments, and pleasant friendships, may all spring from other sources than what Burns called “the mystic tie.” With the warmest appreciation of the pleasures of freemasonry, I, for one, should renounce the whole paraphernalia of colours, aprons, and gewgaws, were I not satisfied of their practical value, and deeply impressed with their usefulness in stimulating to benevolent impulses and charitable deeds. This is, in truth, the chief virtue I care to claim for the order, in this country and in these times. Abroad, the Freemasons, so fiercely cursed by his Holiness the Pope, may mix up democratic caballing with their ceremonials, and play an important part in the spread of liberal principles, but in England, religious and political discussion are alike forbidden in lodge; and though in the olden days, when skilled craftsmen worked together in travelling bands, leaving magnificent monuments of civilisation and piety in their train, the objects of association were better understood, they were not more practical in their results than now. It is impossible to belong to a masonic lodge, or even to eat masonic dinners with regularity, without helping to support some of the most noble charities in the land. You are caught, we will say, by the promise of festivity and the hope of enjoyment. You know a jovial set, and would like to be one of them, and you are in due course proposed, elected, and initiated in some masonic body. From that moment you are a cog in a mighty wheel, and can no more help moving with the rest of the machinery in the direction of good works, than you can avoid wearing your apron when on duty in your lodge. Your earliest lesson is that of charity and toleration; but the great advantage of the rules of the community you have entered, is, that no individual demerits or torpor can long withstand their beneficial tendency. Other precepts you may neglect or ignore. Your private life may be far from irreproachable. You may be depreciated by your fellow-members as “a knife-and-fork mason”—that is, one who cares more for the table of the tavern than the table of the law—and may be

quoted by outsiders in proof of the evil effect of belonging to a secret society. All this rests with yourself. Even what we call the inner mysteries of our order—mysteries which it takes so much time and application to master and comprehend—do not pretend to alter character. A selfish man will be a selfish mason, a churlish man a churlish mason, a conscientious man a conscientious mason, to the end of time. It is wiser to disclaim all legerdmain, and freely confess that no purifying or awakening talisman is given to the masonic neophyte. The knowledge imparted is moderate in extent, and the man obtaining it finds that he has but learnt the rudiments of an elaborate system, the true bearing of which is veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Those who sneer at masonic symbols, who ask with conventional irony why masons cannot accomplish the good they profess to seek without donning aprons and bedecking themselves with glittering baubles, should, to be consistent, denounce symbolism altogether. Take the House of Commons, and note the precise formality with which old rites and customs are observed there, and say whether the solemn Speaker would look as wise and dignified in a shooting-jacket or a dressing-gown, and whether the quaintly wiggid and gowned figures below him are not more appropriately attired than if they wore the paletot and wide-awake of country life. Regard the throne with its surroundings of velvet and ermine and jewels and gold; the pulpit with its conventional black and white; the bench with its time-honoured robes; the bar with its wigs and gowns; or, turning to private life, remark how the symbolism of dress and ornament attends us from the cradle to the grave. The white draperies of the christening ceremony, the orange-flowers and favours of the wedding, the ghastly mockery of the nodding black feathers on the hearse, are surely as open to criticism as our masonic blue and white aprons, or the gay ornaments. Freemasons, let it be remembered, rarely obtrude their finery on the outer world. There are other excellent societies, the members of which periodically break out in buff boots and green tunics, or march with linked fingers through the town, to the clashing of wind instruments, and behind banners bearing copy-book axioms of approved morality. But with Freemasons it is a point of honour not to wear the costume of their craft, or any adornment pertaining to it, save in their own lodges. To do otherwise—to flaunt collar, apron, or jewel in other places—is a serious masonic offence, and one censured with severity by the authorities. The sole exception to this rule is some important public occasion, when a dispensation is granted by the grand master of the order, and the first stone of some great building is laid, or the remains of some distinguished brother is committed to the earth. The exceptional character of these occurrences entitles us to the boast that our symbols are only worn for the benefit of those who understand them, and to whose technical knowledge they appeal. In some cases, they mark

the rank of the wearer, like the soldier's uniform; in others, the practical good he has effected, like—shall we say, the bishop's mitre?

Each division of the order, called a lodge, is ruled over by certain officers, who are appointed by its master. To be eligible for this high post, you must have served in one of two subordinate offices for twelve months, and must be sufficiently skilled in what is called the "working," to conduct the elaborate rites creditably. The first condition is imperative; the second is sometimes evaded, though neither the master accepting office, nor the lodge electing him, acts up to the bounden obligation when this is the case. The cost of freemasonry depends almost entirely upon the lodge you join, and is governed by the habits of the brethren composing it, and the by-laws they have themselves agreed on. The broad rules controlling all lodges, and all Masons owing allegiance to the Grand Lodge of England, are things apart from these by-laws, though the latter have to be formally sanctioned as containing nothing opposed to the book of constitutions or the leading principles of the craft.

Each lodge meets several times a year, and in London the members usually dine or sup together at the conclusion of their "work." The master, the past-masters, and the two wardens, are all members of the masonic parliament; in this way every Freemason has directly or indirectly a voice in the government of the order. Each past-master has been master of a lodge for twelve months, and both master and wardens are elected by their fellows. The masonic parliament meets four times a year, and is called Grand Lodge. Its debates are held in the really magnificent temple in Great Queen-street, London, which has just been rebuilt under the auspices of the grand superintendent of works, Brother Frederick Cockerell, and is the property of the craft. It is presided over by a grand master, who is nominally elected every year, but who is eligible for re-election, and who is, as some Masons think unwisely, virtually appointed for life. Once in every year, some one is proposed and seconded as a fit and proper person to fill the position of grand master, and the votes of those assembled in Grand Lodge are taken. The present grand master of English Freemasons, the Earl of Zetland, who succeeded the late Duke of Sussex, is so widely and deservedly popular, that he has held this position for more than twenty years. The propriety of limiting the grand master's eligibility for office, and electing him for four or six years and no longer, is a point upon which there is considerable difference of opinion, and one which it is unnecessary to do more than allude to here. The grand master is aided by a council, and supported by grand officers, who may be termed the upper house of the masonic parliament. These dignitaries are appointed by the grand master, hold office for a year, have past rank, and wear distinguishing insignia for life. All questions of masonic law—and problems affecting these are of constant occurrence—all difficulties of administration, all disputes and dissensions—and, despite their

brotherly love, even Masons occasionally quarrel—can be brought before Grand Lodge as the final authority. Committees of its members sit regularly to adjudicate and present periodical reports, advise on the bestowal of money-gifts to necessitous brethren, and on the answers to be given to those asking for interference or advice. The time devoted to the subject, by those who take a leading part in these councils; the patient unwearying attention given to minute and frequently tedious details; the constant sacrifice of private interests to the common good; and the careful and laborious discussion which precedes every decision—all this would astonish those who regard freemasonry as a mere plea for conviviality. It is a simple fact that busy professional men habitually devote a considerable portion of their time to business drudgery; that boards and committees meet to debate and divide; that in no case is remuneration or reward looked for. This voluntary self-absorption is not the least striking part of freemasonry, for, at the meetings I speak of, neither convivial pleasures nor indirect personal advantage can be hoped for. It is sheer dogged hard work, performed gratuitously and cheerfully by men upon whom the rules and precepts I have hinted at, have made full impression. Let it be borne in mind that ten thousand initiations took place last year; that the income of the craft exceeds that of many a principality; that its members subscribe to their three charitable institutions—the Freemasons' Girls' School, the Freemasons' Boys' School, and the Asylum for Aged Freemasons and their Widows, some twenty thousand pounds annually; that the cares of administration and distribution devolve upon the busy men forming the committees and sub-committees named; and it will be readily seen that, apart from its "secrets," this time-honoured institution has worked, and is working, substantial and undeniable good. Its hold on earnest members is the best proof I can advance of the reality of its tie.

But it is time you saw one of the institutions we are so proud of. Let us take a railway ticket from either Waterloo or Victoria station, and after a twenty minutes' run alight at Clapham junction. A few minutes' bewilderment in the dreary subterranean caverns of that mighty maze; a few abortive ascents up steps which are so ingeniously placed at the sides of the tubular dungeon we traverse as to lure us upon wrong platforms, whence we are sent below again ignominiously; a short game at question and answer with the old crone selling oranges at the corner; and, crossing another railway bridge, we are in front of a spacious red brick building, on the lofty tower of which, besides the clock, are a pair of compasses and a blazing sun. We will not stop to talk further about symbols now. After admiring the spacious well-kept garden of this place, and enjoying the sweet scents rising up from every flower-bed, we make for the front door, when the sharp click of a croquet-mallet reaches us from the right, and, turning a corner, we come

upon a thoroughly happy party. Some twenty girls, from twelve to fifteen years old, are laughing merrily at the vigour with which one of their number has just sent the ball rattling through the little croquet hoops. The healthy, happy, laughing group framed in by foliage, and relieved by the bright green of the velvety turf upon which they play; the frankly modest confidence with which we, as strangers, are received; the courteous offer to accompany us round the grounds and the house; the revelation that, as this is the matron's birthday, every one is making merry in her honour—are all a capital commentary upon the masonic virtues I have vaunted. Next, we learn that some ladies and gentlemen are playing in another portion of the grounds, and in a few paces we are in their midst, being welcomed by house-committeemen, are hearing that our chance visit has happened on a red-letter day, and that other brethren are expected down. The speaker is an exalted Mason who has five capital letters after his name, and, as I have never seen him out of masonic costume before, it does not seem quite natural that he should play croquet without his apron and decorations. This gentleman (who will, I am sure, accept this kindly-meant remembrance in the spirit dictating it) is so pleasantly paternal, his exuberant playfulness and affectionate interest in the games played, and in the pretty little players, is so prominent, that we soon forget his grander attributes, and settle down to a quiet chat on the discipline and rules of the establishment. This is the Freemasons' Girls' School. It clothes, educates, and thoroughly provides for, one hundred and three girls, who must be daughters of Freemasons, between eight and sixteen years of age, and who are elected by the votes of its subscribers. The comfort of its internal arrangements, its spotless cleanliness, the healthiness of its site, the judicious training and considerate kindness of its matron and governesses, are themes we descendant upon at length; the rosy faces and unrestrained laughter of the children bearing forcible testimony to us. The committee of management visit this school frequently and regularly, and their deliberations generally terminate in a romp with the school-girls. The little gardens, some with paper notices pinned to the shrubs, with: "Please do not come too near, as we have sown seed near the border—Signed 28 and 22," written in pencil in a girlish hand; the healthy cleanly dormitories, the light and airy glass-covered exercise-hall, where the young people drill and dance; the matron's private sanctum, which is like a fancy fair to-day in the extent and variety of the gay birthday presents laid out; the tea-room, where we all have jam in honour of the matron's nativity; the board-room, hung with the portraits of grand masters and masonic benefactors, and which is placed at our disposal that we may enjoy a quiet chat with the two dear little girls in whom we have a special interest, are all visited in turn. Then a procession is formed, and "We love Miss Smoothetwig dearly, and so say all of us!" is

sung, while Brother Buss, P.M. and P.Z., who has just come in, and Brother Putt, G.A.D.C., his fellow house-committeeman who has already welcomed us, beat time joyously to the good old "jolly good fellow" tune. This song is a little surprise prepared every year for the birthdays of governess and matron, and the amiable assumption of delight at an unexpected novelty which beams from the latter's kindly face when the well-worn tune is sung, is not the least pleasing incident of the day.

The Freemasons' Boys' School is at Wood-lane, Tottenham, and in it from eighty to a hundred sons of Freemasons are clothed, educated, and provided for, with similar comfort and completeness. The institution for the relief of aged Freemasons and their widows, though neither so wealthy nor so liberal as the other two, provides an asylum for, and grants annuities to, the old and infirm.

These are some of the secrets of freemasonry. The coffins in which, as many of my friends firmly believe, we immature young and tender candidates; the painful brandings which make sitting down impossible; the raw heads, red-hot pokers, and gory bones, with which we heighten the awesomeness of our dreadful oaths; the wild revels and orgies which some ladies believe in,—must be left in obscurity. Having shown the fair fruits of masonry, I must leave you to form your unaided judgment of the tree which brings them forth. Besides, I dare not reveal more. The learned author of many volumes of masonic lore has stated his firm conviction that Adam was a Freemason, and that the order, and its accompanying blessings, extend to other worlds than this. I offer no opinion on any such highly imaginative hypothesis, but confine myself to the stout assertion that Freemasons have a tie which is unknown to the outer world, and that their institution is carefully adapted to the needs, hopes, fears, weaknesses, and aspirations, of human nature. That it has unworthy members is no more an argument against the order, than the bitter sectarianism of the Rev. Pitt Howler, and the fierce uncharitableness of Mrs. Backbite, are arguments against Christianity.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XIII. SUSPICION.

SOME of the bank shareholders were in such good humour with their large dividends, and especially with the successful introduction of "the great Lackson" into their society, that they anxiously cast about for some way of exhibiting their overflowing gratitude, and proposed presenting a gorgeous silver testimonial to the chairman. This "graceful act," as the papers called it, was enthusiastically carried out. A plateau, candelabra, and *et cætera*, of massive silver, and into which had been ingeniously

worked all sorts of banking emblems, was very soon constructed by Messrs. Tilbury, the eminent silversmiths, and was ready for presentation. The shareholders particularly admired the little miniature cash-shovel, beautifully bound with gold instead of brass, and the pile of imitative coin and notes which was at the base. As one of the shareholders said with justice, "You could see the very Queen's head on the half-crown."

This was presented to Mr. Tillotson at his own residence by a deputation of shareholders, who made speeches, in which it was said very often, "You, sir, having stood by the cradle of the company; and you, sir, having nursed its tender years and seen it through many shocks; you, sir, had now the proud satisfaction of standing by and seeing it arrive at all the strength of a lusty manhood." Mr. Tillotson listened with true modesty and secret astonishment to this description of his services, and acknowledged the receipt of this sumptuous present "in a suitable manner." The deputation was then entertained at an "elegant repast," when there were more healths and more speeches.

This suggested to Mr. Tillotson that it was time for him to entertain some of his brother directors magnificently. This, too, was strongly pressed on him by the secretary, who said, truly, that these things were all advertisements, and better than advertisements. He was growing interested in the bank, too, himself, and though there was that little shadow at home, still on the whole he was very happy, and thanked God every morning for being privileged to enjoy so much undeserved happiness. Everything would, no doubt, come right; and he had such sweetness and patience, and was ready to lay everything to the account of his own defects or fault, that he had very soon argued himself into something like calm and acceptance of everything that came.

"This is to be *your* feast, Mrs. Tillotson," he said to his wife. "Who will you ask? We must have our friend Ross, who is behaving so well, and our dear captain and his niece; but she will not come; and 'the great Lackson,' as they call him, and the Tilneys; and I have asked, without consulting you, Mr. and Mrs. Bunnett, great City people, and *our* people, too—they will amuse you—and Mr. Nelgrove, another City man, and one or two more I should like to ask. I begin to take interest in these things. Six months ago the idea of my giving a dinner would have been the most comical thing in the world."

"You are so kind—so good," she said; "more good to me than I deserve."

Yet, when she was alone, she began thinking with a sort of dread of Ross, and how he would behave before company, and how, if he should arrive in a humour of disappointment, what a scene he might bring about. But presently came a note from him in this pleasant strain:

"Dear Tillotson. I shall be glad to feast

with you if you give us a good dinner, which of course you will. It will be, of course, a treat for a poor fellow like me to see all your state and glory. Give my respects to the charming Mrs. Tillotson.

"Yours,
"W. Ross."

She had hoped he would *not* come. Even in this note she saw a secret earnest of some outburst. It was indeed certain that the lights, the flowers, the gold and silver, and all the choice evidences of their prosperity, would only inflame him; and she could not bear to think that that kind, good, gentle heart who worshipped her should receive the least mortification in public above all.

She came to him again. "I want some one else asked to our party," she said; and the devout face was put close to his.

A delighted smile came into his face. "Now this is what I like," he said; "fill the table; don't ask me about it. Who is your friend, if you will tell me—a female confidential friend?"

She hesitated a moment. "It is Mr. Grainger," she said. "I am afraid that, unless he is there, Ross may——"

The delight fled from his face in a moment. "What does this mean?" Suddenly he checked himself, and said, coldly, "To be sure; ask whom you please—any one you like. Grainger, by all means."

It flashed on her then for the first time what was in his mind. "Dear husband," she said (and what always seemed to him the "divine look of earnestness" came into her face), "surely you know what we spoke of so lately, and that we agreed upon that one course. This Grainger can be useful to us. I know how much I owe to you, dearest, for all your deep love and true and faithful affection, which, as I stand here and speak, I would die to find some way of requiting."

Into Mr. Tillotson's pale face came back the old enthusiasm. "You are an angel," he said; "above my wretched earthy nature by a million of degrees. I feel ashamed at this moment. Yes, we shall have this Grainger, Ross's friend, and make him welcome. I am the old stupid short-sighted being I always was, and always shall be!"

The letter was sent, and Grainger wrote to say he would come. Still a weight hung upon Mr. Tillotson, and which he could not put away from him, although he was one of those men who tried to reason, and sometimes successfully, with their feelings and prejudices. In this mood he went, one afternoon, after his banking was done, to see his friend the captain, whose life had been flowing on pleasantly in his old occupations, busy with his tools, the lamp, and furniture repairs. He found him in the flowered dressing-gown and spectacles, busy with his favourite work, honing his "rayshors"—giving them a sweet edge—an operation he was always delighted

to perform for a friend, and performed with surprising skill.

"My dear Tillotson," he said, "delighted at this visit. Sit down and let me see you. You find me all in a mess here. Tom must always have something to fiddle with, like a sixty-year-old child. And how is she, that elegant creature your wife? You may be proud of her. I declare, last Sunday, I never saw a finer woman in my life. Never."

Mr. Tillotson looked at him with a sad interest. "None of our poor tongues could do justice to her. She is miles above us—and—above me; and that—that thought, my dear captain, is making me wretched."

"My goodness!" said the captain, stopping his strolling in wonder. "Ah! Folly, my dear boy."

Mr. Tillotson shook his head sadly. "No folly; none in the world. She is superior to us all, and must know it. What business had I to think of her, or one like her? Beings like her must have something they can love, and that can return their love. Not an old worn, beaten heart like mine. I do not blame her; but I ought to have known it myself. It was cruel to her."

The captain's jaw fell. "Eh?" he said. Then it all came upon him, and with that grave voice and good sense which was common to him, he laid his hand on his friend's sleeve. "My dear fellow, now don't. This is all hippishness, neither more nor less. You've got as fine a woman as a man could wish for—a woman that loves you, as I know. After a time you can't expect them, the creatures, to be all showing it every hour in the day, with affection and kisses, and that sort of thing. It's out of reason and nature. They have the house, and the dinners, and the cooks, and a hundred things to look after; and if she had a little liking for her old playfellow that she was brought up with, sure, Tillotson, don't we all do much the same, and have gone after fifty different girls, one with another, without minding what became of the last? Why, if she hadn't a little touch for her old flame, she wouldn't be the fine creature she is. Just think of that, my boy. Why, I declare," he added, with the deepest sympathy, "when I think of all they have to go through, the creatures, and with bringing children into the world, and nursing them through, and bringing them up, why, they make strong men ashamed of themselves."

Mr. Tillotson was struck with this earnestness. "My dear captain," he said, "you are right. I behave like a child at times, and feel like a child. I have been very happy; too much so for one like me; and yet, I don't know how, a weight has come on me latterly, and a sense of presentiment that something is impending—that some of that old misery will turn up, and that all will be snatched from me, and that I have no business to be so blessed as I am. It is absurd, but I cannot shut it out."

"Ah, my dear fellow, megrims every one of

them. I used to have them, getting up in the morning after the mess, I declare to goodness, ready to cut my throat from the Lows. But it went off after a chop, or, if *that* failed, a nip of good old cognac."

CHAPTER XIV. THE FIRST DINNER.

The day at last arrived—Monday. The grave menials of state who "attended" in the City, at Mansion House and Guildhall, were in waiting. They smiled, those portly men, at this little effort, as compared with the gigantic festivals they were accustomed to. Their chubby fingers were used to the handling of solid wrought gold and silver. The glories of the Egyptian Hall were what they were accustomed to, and therefore, when Mr. Bowler characterised Mr. Tillotson's party as "a little effort," he might be reasonably pardoned. These gentlemen rather looked down on the West-end waiters, who in their turn despised the coarse unadorned sumptuousness of their City brethren.

Mr. Tillotson was kept at his bank a little later than usual. Mrs. Tillotson at first, from the mere novelty, took some little interest in what was going on. But, after a time, Mr. Bowler, who had come early to have "a general hi to the 'ole," which consisted in languidly laying his head on one side, and taking slant views along the table, hinted that any assistance of the sort, however well meant, only disturbed his imagination. Then she went up to her organ, and the rich melody came floating down to the hall on Mr. Bowler's ears, who said, en passant, that it was "fair, fair and ladylike."

As she played on, some one came and called, and an assistant told her that there was a gentleman below that wished to see Mr. Tillotson "particular and important." This sort of importunity always gave her a shock and chill, for it was associated with messages from Mr. Grainger.

She sent down word as to the time when Mr. Tillotson would be in. Then came a reply to know if she was sure; for the matter was "very particular."

After this she sat at her harmonium thoughtfully, smoothing the golden hair, and not playing. So the day went by until five o'clock drew near, when she wondered that Mr. Tillotson had not returned.

Suddenly she was roused by the tall gaunt figure of Martha Malcolm standing before her. "The gentleman that was here before was below."

Mrs. Tillotson desired her to tell him that Mr. Tillotson had not come home yet.

Martha stood there gauntly. "He was told that," she said, "and hasn't gone."

Her mistress then said that she must tell some of the men to see him.

"He is in the study, sitting down," said Martha, in the same tone, "and he said your husband would know in good time the rights of his coming and going. I only repeat what *he* said."

Again Mrs. Tillotson felt the chill and dread she had felt before, and did not answer. Martha went down. After a few minutes' pause her mistress rose and went down also, slowly.

In the study, sitting in her husband's chair, was a short, red-cheeked man, rather shabbily dressed, stout, and dissipated-looking, with weak eyes, and two red rings under them. He only half rose as she entered. "Well, what message do you bring me? No more hunting me about from post to pillar. I've had too much and more of that. Oh! are you Mrs. Tillotson? Beg pardon. But my eyes are not of the best."

She stood before him, almost haughtily. "What do you want?" she said. "We are busy to-day. My husband will not be in for some time. Could you come in the morning?"

"No, I can't," he answered, bluntly. "Nothing of the sort. All that sort of business is gone and over now. It did very well till lately; but we have done with it. I have suffered enough. But everybody gets their innings at last, madam."

"I don't understand you," she said, "or to what you allude. I must really ask you to go. If you have any business——"

"And you don't know or guess? Really now, would you have me believe that? *You*, wife of his bosom, bone of the bone, and all that. Shove me out, the day you are giving a dinner, with the smell of the stews coming up. Call the police, perhaps. I shouldn't be surprised if that was the next step. Then," he added, with great deliberation, "I should really wish to see *that* attempted, just for curiosity, eh? Come, my dear madam," said he, rising, "I want to see him; where is he? For I leave town, and I can tell you he wouldn't like to miss seeing me, a friend that he hasn't set eyes upon for fifteen years."

She was growing nervous. An undefined terror was filling her. "I don't understand; what *can* you want? Do go away, or he will be here presently."

The other fell back laughing. "Ah, no more acting. You have done it well, so far. Of course he has told you about me—East-wood."

"Never," she said, eagerly. "I never heard your name. Go away, do, whatever you mean. You will only worry and annoy him, and he has enough on his mind. I can get you money; but go."

The other shook his head. "As for money, that will come by-and-by. Now, somehow, I believe you do know nothing;" and he looked at her for a moment with a puzzled air, and half irresolute. Suddenly he stood up. "Well, after all, I believe I *am* an intruder here, and shall take myself off. There, that's behaving like a gentleman. Admit that. Fact is, no wonder you could know nothing, for there is nothing to know. And so you wish me to go?"

"Yes," she said, eagerly, "nothing so much. Please."

"He is attached to you, eh? Worships the ground you walk on? Has the carpet taken up and put by for a relic?"

"Yes, yes. But pray, pray go."

"Ah," said the other, taking his hat. "Shame for him if he wasn't fond of you. There, don't think of it any more. What would you say to his owing me a hundred and two pound ten for fifteen years, and never paying even a pound's interest—supposing *that* is what I want from him? And when I hear of dinners, and plate, and a bank, it's only natural a man should cut up rough at such treatment. I beg your pardon," he added, obsequiously. "I really do, for intruding. I can see him any time, so don't mention it to him, nor yet my name—Blackwood. Good-bye, Mrs. Tillotson; good-bye, and forgive me."

He went out, leaving her in a state of wonder and stupefaction. There was something half jest, half earnest, in the man's manner, which she could not understand. That sudden change, too, puzzled her. But she dismissed it all, and said to herself, wearily, "What do all these things mean?"

In half an hour Mr. Tillotson came home. She cleared her brow, and smoothed her hair, as she heard his step. Both faces went through the same process; both approached each other with weariness underneath, but with a cheerfulness that was put on. Both saw what was under each assumed cheerfulness, and went away to dress; for the hour was at hand.

A picket of the City gentlemen was in the hall when the company began to arrive. They at once stood to their arms. No need of asking names. Mr. Bowler knew well the figure of Mr. Bunnett, the famous "Ryder, Bunnet, and Ryder," whose plate he had removed deftly at a hundred feasts. So, too, with the form of "the great Lackson," before whom he all but grovelled. After all, should adversity overtake any one of us who are asked out to dinners, could there be a more agreeable retreat discovered, or line of life in which we can honestly make our bread, than the career of a waiter in good and choice practice? We should see the best of society, breathe the air of refined life, have a certain amusement in watching the manners and customs of those above us, and, what is a more costly delectation, enjoy as a sort of perquisite and without impeachment of dishonesty, some share of the rich meats and juices, the select wines, which are set forward for the entertainment of our betters. Why do not reduced gentlemen take to this pleasing occupation?

Mrs. Tillotson, soft and brilliant, yet with a little wistful and almost anxious look, stood in her drawing-room waiting for the guests. The golden hair glistened under the wax-lights: an air of wonderful sweetness hung about her. Was she a little nervous about this, her first party? which, as Mr. Bowler remarked with truth during the day, was a thing to lie on any "lady or gent's sperits, be they ever so high or so low. It always took 'im short," he said, "at

the Manshun 'Us until all was well through, and his 'ed was a laying on his bed."

The great Lackson, for a man so much at ease in finance, was anything but at home in social life. He called Mrs. Tillotson "marm," and seemed to be taking half a turn ahead or astern across the rug with such heavy motion both of speed and tongue, that one looked for the sound of splashing paddles. Mrs. Tillotson gave him gentle welcome, which only disarranged him more. Then came Ross and his friend—Ross more flushed and wild-eyed than usual, with cheek-bones more hot and projecting; but still with a ferocious handsomeness upon him. His friend Grainger was submissive, quiet, and respectful, as usual. But something more cheerful made its appearance in the shape of Mr. Bunnett and Mrs. Bunnett, of the City, who came in jovially, and appeared to have broken out all over into broad smiles. They came in arm in arm; clean, resplendent, and burnished all over. After their arrival Nelgrove, an ecclesiastical-looking City man; and the captain, who had declared some days before that it was high time for him "to treat himself to a dress-coat of the very tip-top fashion, just as he had treated himself to a "frock" on the occasion of the wedding, appeared in it, conscious, but shy.

In due time the company went down and sat at dinner. The gorgeous plateau and candelabra presented by the grateful shareholders glittered on the table. At first, Mr. Bowler and his following stood behind, awfully, like guards at a stage execution; but presently, after the solemn raising of the first cover, became galvanised into violent life and motion. The cheerful Bunnett, whose mouth distended between his collars like a gate between two white walls, chatted heartily, as he settled himself to enjoy the meal. The great Lackson was still ill at ease, and uncomfortable. Ross, who had taken down Miss Bunnett (Mrs. Bunnett was on his left), had a sneer as broad as Mr. Bunnett's gate on his face. His eyes were bright, and roamed over the table.

"Lovely, ain't it," said she to him—"the plattoe?"

"Exquisite," said Ross, looking at it. "That's what they gave him—superb. It makes one gasp. Don't you admire it? When will they give you or me anything of this sort? I don't say, when shall we deserve it."

Grainger had drifted up somehow next to Mrs. Tillotson. Under the soft lights in the shareholders' candelabra the golden hair was a feast to look on. Mrs. Lackson had been taken in by Mr. Tillotson. The captain was next to Mr. Nelgrove, who, however, made small account of him, being apparently a worshipper of Mr. Bunnett. Anything more slavish than this almost adoration of the City man could scarcely have been conceived; and it was accompanied with a pleasant badinage and rallying. Mr. Nelgrove spoke of his friend usually as "he."

"Mrs. Tillotson—I say, Mrs. Tillotson, *he's* a

poor man, and will end in the workhouse—of course. Were you ever down at Bulmer? It's uncommonly like a workhouse."

"Now, Nelgrove," said Mr. Bunnett, "you stop. I'll not ask you down to Bulmer again if you don't keep quiet. Bulmer's looking very well just now," he went on to Mrs. Tillotson. "I assure you I laid out seven hundred pounds on the gardens; and I am at this moment in treaty with Lord Drobbam's gardener. Not that I think he's a bit better gardener because he comes from a lord. That's rather against him."

The jackal again struck in. "Mrs. Tillotson, I should be very glad to see Bulmer once more, if I was let. I was only there once or twice; but now that we are getting my Lord Drobbam's gardeners, I suppose I shall have no chance. It's a very poor place—wretched. No peaches, ma'am, no nectarines—O no—no flowers, no grapes, no rhododendrons—quite a wilderness, ma'am. O yes."

Mr. Bunnett laughed heartily at this clever irony, and Mrs. Bunnett bade Mrs. Tillotson not to mind "that Nelgrove," who was always at his joke. Then the subject glided on to something else, and Mr. Nelgrove, turning to the captain, asked him if he had ever been down to Bulmer. "About the finest show-place in England."

The captain, who had been silent, only heard imperfectly. "Eh?" he said, full of smiles.

"Bulmer, Bulmer," said the other, in a loud tone; "every one in the kingdom knows it."

"O, to be sure," said the captain, seeing that his assent was required to something, "to be sure! Fine, indeed. What you may call the right sight."

"The peaches, sir," the other went on, in the same loud tone, "are not matched by the royal fruit. Bullock, the head gardener, won ever so many prizes."

"O yes," said the captain, with eager admiration and assent. "See that, now. Wonderful!"

"What became of Bullock?" said the jackal, across to his patron. "He went away, I know. Of course he wasn't good enough. I'd have thought a hothouse gardener at a hundred a year was pretty well; but that won't do, it seems, for millionnaires. No, no. My Lord Drobbam, it seems, now."

Mr. Bunnett deprecated this attack softly. "No, no; really no. The man took airs upon himself, and I had to part with him. I would have gone on with him, I assure you, if it hadn't been for that."

"Have you seen his picture?" Nelgrove went on, half to the table, half to the captain, "full length, in his liveryman's uniform? Nothing short of Sir Wilkins, R.A., believe me. Five hundred and fifty without the frame. You and I, poor devils, must put up with our cartes at seven and sixpence. I must say, though, a fine likeness."

"Yes," said Mr. Bunnett, modestly. "Sir Wilkins dined with me at one of our Hall dinners, and he said there publicly, after the dinner, that

he was putting out all his strength into it, and going to make it a fine body of colour."

Ross, who heard this speech, gave a laugh, and turned to Miss Bunnett. "That was after dinner, wasn't it?"

"Yes," she said, with pride. "He sat next papa."

"To be sure," said Ross. "Which of the two was most honoured? Art and wealth side by side. That's the style; that's the true alliance. Here, champagne here. Your father's a really great man, and a perfect Mæcenas."

Mr. Tilney heard this remark, and addressed Mrs. Bunnett. "I like to see that mixing, ma'am. It's good for us all. I have heard, in my old court-days, ma'am, long ago, when I used to eat, drink, and, I may say, sleep with the royal family, and had the run of the house—I was, as of course you know," added Mr. Tilney, confidentially, "in the household—nothing could be nicer or more homely than the behaviour of the family; just like you or me, or that butler taking round the sherry now. That's what I like our aristocracy for."

Such of us as know a little of Mr. Tilney can conceive how he spoke to this good lady, and with what unction he enlarged on those old aristocratic days. Here Mr. Nelgrove, the jackal, began to allude as reluctantly to "the gallery" at Bulmer, with a "Do you know what he gives for a pair of statues? I tell him we'll see him in the poorhouse, and Bulmer will be put up to sale, and you or I will get them cheap. That's the way I arrange it, eh? Ha! ha! The worst is, I believe, he'll not be able to ruin himself soon enough. He tries hard, I know; but he'll break down in the attempt."

And Mr. Nelgrove laughed so uproariously at this ludicrously far-fetched idea, that his patron could not but smile. Ross was looking on with bitter contempt, and there was mischief in his eye. As usual, he poured out a stream of irony and banter on Miss Bunnett, who looked at him helplessly. "Do you hear that man?" he said. "Of course the person he is flapping accepts it all. You observe how refined and delicate his flattery is?"

"Flattery!" repeated the young lady, mystified, and all but frightened. "O, you mean flattery."

"Flattery or flattery," he said. "We ought to have one apiece. But I admire the gifts of Mr. Nelgrove. He is a regular artist, you see—has a fine eye for colour and effect." He went on, turning to Nelgrove: "Now, what's your view about our host Tillotson? Will he last long? Will you get anything at his auction?"

Mr. Nelgrove laughed. "Very good, sir; very good."

"I say, Tillotson," Ross called to him, "this gentleman is talking jocosely of *your* coming to the hammer. I dare say we shall see the testimonial put up, and knocked down to a friend of the family. These things are on the cards. Banks, you know, are uncommonly ticklish!"

He ended with a rude harsh laugh. The soft eyes turned towards him hurriedly, and with an imploring look.

Mr. Grainger said, in a low voice, but which was distinctly heard, "Our friend Ross is in one of his malicious moods to-day. He is allowed to say what he likes here. He is a privileged person."

"Indeed he is," said Mr. Tillotson, good humouredly, "and he has a right to be; for we are actually plaintiff and defendant in a lawsuit. But we'll have some wine together, notwithstanding."

Ross's face darkened. "I don't jest about *that*," he said, slowly, "and don't mean to jest about it. I don't take any wine. They have put me on a regimen. Take it away, do you hear." (This was to Mr. Bowler, whose opinion, expressed later at a Manshun 'Us dinner, was, "that that party—refusing of his liquor as he did—was as ill-reggulated a man as ever he met.")

"Regimen!" said Mr. Grainger, in a low voice to Mrs. Tillotson, "he's been keeping a regimen, indeed. It's almost lucky—though you may not think so, Mrs. Tillotson—that I am here, for he is working himself up into one of his moods. Look how he glares at your husband! He thinks he has been insulted in some way. Everything, indeed, is an insult to him now. This magnificence, the wines, the pictures, at this moment, have been 'thrust in his face,' he would call it, to make him feel his own poverty. I wish I were beside him."

Piteous distress was in Mrs. Tillotson's face. She all but wrung her hands.

"I feel what you say to be true," she went on, "and every day I feel the want in myself of that power that can control others. I am wretchedly weak. Even this very afternoon some one came to our house—a wild, half-savage being—forced himself in, hunting for my husband. Why should this happen to us? Why should Ross—for it was one of *his* set, I know—expose us to this?"

A quick light came into Grainger's eyes. "What sort of man was this? Was he short, stout, with red rings round his eyes?"

She almost started. "Why, you know all things," she said.

"No, that was none of Ross's set. He was of your husband's set." His voice got lower. "But I have no right to speak to you of such things. I could have prevented his coming; but you would think, naturally, that I was officiously thrusting myself into all your concerns. I may say this much, that he is a dangerous man, and it grieves me to tell you that his presence here bodes your husband some trouble. I must warn you of this."

They were so earnest in their talk, and her eyes were turned to him with such eagerness, that neither of them noticed Mr. Tillotson—utterly abstracted from his neighbour's conversation—watching them with an expression of pain that was evident to all.

"Go on, tell me more," he said. "That is,

if you will so indulge me. I may be a little useful."

"No, I recollect now," she went on. "You must be wrong; for he suddenly changed and became quite deferential—that it was all a mistake, and that he only wanted a small debt that my husband owed him."

"And he changed in this way when you—? This is important."

"When I——let me think. O, let me recollect. Yes. When he found that I knew nothing of him, or that my husband had not told me anything of him."

"Ah, there it is," said Grainger, hastily. "I see through all these little ruses. I met that man abroad, and I know him by heart. I know the whole at this moment. There is some passage in your husband's life which he——"

"You are mistaken," she said, passionately. "You are fond of repeating that——"

"I do not know it, but I believe it. Think of that night at St. Alans, when he left your table. This man knows something of it—found that you were not in the secret, and will work upon your husband for ends of his own to keep it from you. That is the game; at least, so I read it."

The colour came to her cheeks. "I do not so accept it," she said. "Your theories are too ingenious, and built on too slight a foundation. This is some common man who is in want of money."

Grainger bent his head and smiled. "As you please. You won't understand me till it is too late. You will call me then, and I shall not come, perhaps. What if I tell you his name, which you do not know, Mrs. Tillotson?"

"Ah! *that would be a proof*," she said.

"Eastwood," he said, in a slow distinct voice, and with his eyes steadily fixed on her.

CHAPTER XV. THE DINNER (CONTINUED).

THERE were other eyes, which they had not noticed, bent forward, devouring them. There was a pale face watching this whispered conversation, where the heads were bent together, almost with agony. The heavy stout lady beside the host, though "making an excellent dinner," as she said herself afterwards, thought him almost "*impolite*, *Bunnett*," and "never so much as asked me if I had a mouth belonging to me."

Ross, too, from afar off, had been watching also with a bitter sneer on his mouth, restless, impatient, and not attending to his neighbour. He saw the worn, anxious look on Mr. Tillotson's face; and, with that ill humour of his which took any victim that offered, said, half aloud, "Look at our friend's face! Just look! Tillotson, I say, are you going to eat your guests with your dinner? Are you ill? Don't he look ill, now? I appeal to the ladies."

There was an unconcealed sneer and insolence in the way this was spoken. Mr. Tillotson coloured and recovered. "I am quite well," he said, coldly. "Why do you say I look ill?"

"Interest. Interest, of course," said Ross,

with a laugh. "Miss Bunnett, how do you like this house? The pictures and the finery show you what banking can do. Long live the City! I say. When I am altogether run out of means, I think I must take to the City, and come in time to have a place like your Bully Hall which that gentleman warms up so much about."

"Bulmer is our place," said the young lady, coldly.

"Well, Bulmer. I beg its pardon. I say, Tillotson, you should let out a little, and not hoard as you do. This young lady says you should give a ball, and not keep up a melancholy face, as if you were ordered for execution. When he comes to sit to Huish—isn't he the swell painter?—they will say you were trying to look like Byron."

Grainger struck in his calm voice: "You see, our friend Ross takes bitter views. The world has rubbed him a little, Miss Bunnett. He has been disappointed, and he has had a bad opinion from his lawyer to-day about that funny lawsuit we spoke of."

Ross's eyes flashed fury. "I have not," he said, angrily. "It's just the contrary. I know the parties who will laugh on the wrong side of their countenances. But I see this is some of your joking that you picked up at Homburg, where they stripped you nicely, my fine friend."

The Bunnetts and other City people listened, wondering, but could make nothing of what they heard. This might be the talk of high society; so they held themselves in suspense. At any rate, it was time for "the ladies to retire," and Mrs. Tillotson gladly rose.

When the gentlemen came up an hour later, Mr. Nelgrove was asking the captain privately, "Who, now, could you tell me, is that man Ross? Very odd, very odd indeed."

"Ah, bless you," said the captain, "that's all gag, as we may call it. The pair are always going on that way together—at it morning, noon, and night. A sort of quizzing, you know."

"O, quizzing!" said the other, doubtfully. "But I declare I thought he was in good earnest."

Mr. Grainger stole over to Mrs. Tillotson as soon as he entered. "Would you show me your new piano?" he said. "Who is the maker? I am longing to see it." And Mr. Tillotson's eyes followed them over into the next room. "We have been on a volcano since you left us," said Grainger, in a low voice. "It passes belief all we have gone through. Ross is losing his senses, I believe; and, though I say it, really only for me—"

"This is growing dreadful," she said, putting her hands to her face in sore distress.

"When the ladies went, his only restraint was gone. He contradicted nearly every word your husband said. Mr. Tillotson, I must say, bore it with admirable temper. 'What can *he* know of pictures,' he said, 'who has lived in a hole of a bank all his life? Now, of course, he has come out into civilised life, but it will take time and training to civilise him to that extent.' Then he went on to become worse. I am afraid he

has been drinking more than he ought. At last I think your husband lost his temper, and I must say answered him with spirit. Set him down quite. You see, Ross is in a sulk. He is brooding over it."

Ross was in this state, and now came over to them. "When did you begin to take interest in pianos?" he said. "Is that the way to attend to your guests, Mrs. Tillotson? As for your husband, he has insulted me down-stairs, and, by Heavens, he shall answer it. He thinks, because he throws his *mess* down here before me, because he gives us a glass of miserable wine that he don't know how to choose, he can treat me as he likes. Another minute, and I would have thrown it in his face. He supposes he can insult me."

"You insulted *him*. Grossly insulted him," said Grainger.

"I did not," said the other, fiercely. "What is it to you, if I did? Look at him now, peering over here with his pious face—the sweet suffering Joseph! And to insult me before this pack of low cockneys, too! I'll have it out with him, and make him apologise on his knees, and in this very room."

"O Ross, Ross," she said, in a low voice of anguish, "will nothing have any effect on you? You are making me more and more wretched every hour."

"That comes well from you," he said. "You may thank yourself for all this. Everything I do now is your own work. Recollect that."

Mr. Nelgrove came sidling over. "Shall we not hear the instrument?" he said, gaily. "Here's Mr. Bunnett really a judge. Ask him"—Mr. Bunnett was rolling down slowly—"ask *him* if he would take a twenty-pound note for his piano—just do, for the fun of the thing. I think, Bunnett, it was twenty-five pound ten you gave for that satin-wood piano, with the gold and the carvings, eh?"

Mr. Bunnett smiled good humouredly and modestly.

"Didn't Erard tell you," went on Nelgrove, "it was the cheapest in his shop?" Then, in a low whisper to Mrs. Tillotson, "Gave five hundred for it! Saw the cheque myself."

Thus those rooms, not very large as they were, had become a theatre of human passions. Several plays were going on together: suspense, anxiety, doubt, distrust, resentment, intrigue, faded conventionality; yet over the surface a roseate complacency that all around was smooth, conventional, and going on cheerfully.

In the midst of this Mrs. Tillotson played. ("They have a full grand at Bulmer," Mr. Nelgrove whispered under the back of his hand to the captain, "that would fill a church;" news utterly unintelligible to the captain, who thought a full grand might be a foreign officer of some kind, and said, "Yes. Have they, now?") When she had done, and had risen softly, it had grown late. Mrs. Bunnett, between whom and Mrs. Tilney no approximation had taken place, was rustling her rich silk noisily. Mrs. Tillotson had risen, and was softly walking

into the front room, when, at the door of the back drawing-room, a servant came in with a card on a salver. She met him so suddenly, that, with an instinct, she took it from him.

Grainger alone saw the look of doubt and abject agony that came into her face, and saw, too, the way she crushed the card up in her hand—saw, too, the hesitating way she stopped, turned back, and went on again, as if she knew not what to do. In a moment he was at her side, with a smile on his face, as if he was still speaking of the piano. In another moment Mr. Tillotson, turning restlessly, observed him take the card from her hand, then whisper something, and, with a nod of intelligence, leave the room.

Down-stairs, Mr. Bowler, not yet retired, said to his colleagues that it was “out of all ressin” to have “fellers” like that coming at “unregular” hours—a feller that was there twice afore that day to his knowledge. A feller, too, if *he* had any acquaintance with ladies and gents at the Manshun ’Us or elsewhere, was no more of a gennelman than that ’ere boot-jack. What was he in the front parlour now for, with the other gent, along o’ the coats and ’ats a *hinterfering*? There, the ladies and gents are a coming down.” They were indeed—and “the gent” and Grainger came out in good time, according to Mr. Bowler’s view. So there really was no “hinterfering” with the coats and hats.

They were all descending, Mrs. Bunnett’s dress rustling and crackling, like ships under heavy sail. The Bunnetts’ carriage was waiting, about which Mr. Nelgrove, pleasantly facetious to the end, would have his jest. “You’ve seen, I suppose,” he said to Mr. Tilney, “our friend’s tumble-down old Brougham which he bought second-hand? It’s coming up now. And the horse, which he got cheap out of a cab. O yes.” But this was not so successful, for the night was dark, and the scene confused and unsuited to irony, and this second-hand view of things came naturally enough to Mr. Tilney, and did not seem so far-fetched an idea. At last they were all gone.

Now as the last carriage drove off, and Mr. Tillotson and Mrs. Tillotson are standing alone in the drawing-room, he began at once, excitedly: “I cannot endure this any longer. It is too much—far too much. I have been as enduring as self-respect will allow; but there is a point beyond which we are not to go. But, at any rate, I can’t do it. I can do no more. I have suffered enough.”

With her eyes raised from the ground, and in which there was the old irresistible devotional expression, she said: “It is quite true, indeed. Yes; such restraint is too noble.”

“Yes,” he said, bitterly, “too soft and foolish. It was a wonderful spectacle. You would not match it; but I am sick of it. I am not called on to make these sacrifices. What is that man to me, with the mysteries of those with him?

They may have their reasons, but I have not, and have no connexion with them. I am not to be pointed at—disgraced—as a weak, foolish creature, that any one can laugh at, for him and his friends. I have seen enough of this wretched life to-night to sicken me. But I think it high time to begin and look to myself now, in the true selfish and proud way, after looking to every one else all my life.”

Now that he at last looked at her, she stood before him like a sweet penitent, utterly overwhelmed and miserable. The old St. Alans light seemed of a sudden to rise about, the old St. Alans music to fill the air.

“O,” he said, suddenly, “forgive me! I know not what I am talking about. I am a wretched, miserable man, that deserves all, all. O, if you knew what I have suffered to-night in a hundred ways, you would be indulgent and pity me. But because my heart has been wrung I must vent it all on your soul. What do you think of me?” The light of joy that came back into her face reassured him. “I talk folly and wickedness when I talk of suffering. I am only too happy—more than I deserve. And while it lasts, while you remain to me, I should be indeed content. But mind,” he said, and the old doubt came back into his face, “if once *that* be taken from me, if they succeed in weakening the only link that brings me to the joys of life, I am lost indeed. You will not let them. It is folly, but I cannot help it.”

Now came in Mr. Bowler to look after the lights. The impression in his mind was that the host and hostess were talking with delight on the successful way in which everything had “gone off,” and were overpowered with satisfaction at the glimpse they had had of “Manshun ’Us” festivities. A good deal of the success, he thought, might be set down to his exertions; and he thought it rather ill bred that no acknowledgment—often made affably at the “Manshun ’Us” by the Lord Mayor himself—had been tendered on this occasion. But host and hostess were so selfishly absorbed in discussing the feast for their own glorification, that they took no notice of Mr. Bowler, which, as that gentleman said the following evening at a real City dinner, “was only the way of the world.”

Thus closed a day which was the beginning of the working out of a strange change in that house.

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THE TALE OF AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE.

IN SIX WEEKLY PORTIONS. SECOND PORTION.

CHAPTER III.

AUNT and Uncle Gough were neither rich nor grand people, though the Gable House was, as I have said, the noblest-looking dwelling in Willborough. The house was not my uncle's own property, but he held a long lease of it. It belonged to some great county magistrate: a baronet whose very name I have forgotten, though he was a mighty person in Willborough, and held property for miles around it. But socially speaking, he was as far removed from our household as if he had lived in Kamschatka. His steward, Mr. Lee, we knew slightly, and saluted when we met him in the street on market-days; but he was so solemn and grand a person that he always chilled me into awe-struck silence, though he often condescended to smile and speak to us girls as we grew up. Once he told uncle that Miss Anna had a monstrous sprightly air and a fine shape, and would turn all the young fellows' heads, by-and-by. "And did he say nothing of our sweet Madge?" asked my aunt, when the flattering words had been reported at home, and had been blushed and smiled at. Aunt Gough, dear tender-hearted soul, feared that I might feel slighted; but, in truth, it had never occurred to me as possible that the pompous Mr. Lee should have noticed or remembered me at all. "Well, well, well," said my uncle, as he drew me to him with so sweet and fond a smile that I felt my eyes fill with tears, "I'm not sure that I want Mr. Lee to make pretty speeches about Madge. He can tell which of them has the brightest eyes; of that he's a good enough judge, so don't think I want to rob you of your compliment, Anna. But if Madge won't turn heads, she'll creep into hearts; won't she, my dear?" He passed his hand softly over my hair as he spoke. I want to tell the truth, and I must confess that just for a moment I felt a sort of irritable impatience at being told I should not turn heads. Why should I not turn heads, as well as another? I half withdrew myself from the touch of the fatherly hand that was caressing me. But the little unworthy

feeling passed directly, and in an instant I had kissed my uncle, and we were all laughing together at Anna's assurance that she would begin to practise the turning process on Mr. Lee himself, the very next time she saw him.

The opportunity was not long in coming, but I think Anna had forgotten her vow; at any rate, I don't believe she tried to fulfil it. It was a fortnight after uncle had told us of Mr. Lee's compliment, on the next market-day but one, that my sister and I, coming homeward up the High-street, saw before us my uncle's tall figure, walking side by side with the portly Mr. Lee. They were talking earnestly together, and going at a much slower pace than we were, so we soon overtook them. The foot pavement of the Willborough High-street was very narrow: so narrow that two persons walking abreast needed its whole width. We could not pass my uncle and Mr. Lee by stepping off the pavement, because on market-days the roadway was filled with country folk. Vendors of poultry, eggs, butter, fruit, and vegetables, stood all along the edge of the causeway. Great carts, piled with country produce, or laden with a ruddy-cheeked farmer's family, jolted ponderously along, the waggoner whip in hand steering his unwieldy horses amidst the crowd as well as he could; and the docile brutes seeming to understand his uncouth gees, and woos, and wuts, with almost human intelligence. Now and again, a prosperous yeoman would ride by, his well-fed cob chafing and fretting at the enforced slowness of the pace. Then there were stout servant-girls with heavy baskets, travelling pedlars hoarse with vaunting their wares, a blind fiddler or doleful ballad-singer, farm-labourers slow and bewildered of aspect, busy shopkeepers, whooping schoolboys, barking dogs, cackling hens, and I don't know what else.

We came close behind my uncle and his companion, and had even walked some paces at their heels, before they were aware of our being near them. "Yes, Mr. Gough," said the steward, with pompous emphasis, "so it is arranged. He will have the advantage of my name, position, and connexion, and I think on the whole we may expect a fair start—a fair start. If a young man is put in the way of making a fair start, I consider it to be his own fault if he does not—if he does not, in fact, start fair."

"Quite so, quite so, Mr. Lee," returned our guardian, with a pleasant laugh. "And I make no doubt but the young gentleman will do you credit."

Here Anna, raising herself on tiptoe, stretched her arm over uncle's shoulder and thrust a bunch of sweet herbs we had been buying for home use, under his nose. He and Mr. Lee stopped and turned round; as they did so, a third gentleman, who had been walking a little in advance of them, and whom we had not seen until now, stopped too, on hearing my uncle's exclamation. "What now!" cried uncle, his face lighting up into smiles, as it always did whenever he saw either of us, "saucy Nanny! I might have known it was one of your pranks. Fie, miss! Ain't you ashamed? Here's Mr. Lee blushing for you."

I don't think Mr. Lee was blushing, but I know Anna was, and laughing too, and looking very pretty. Mr. Lee shook hands with us both, with much condescension; and as we were blocking up the pathway, and were being hustled and pushed this way and that, Uncle Gough bade us two walk on, and said: "Perhaps Mr. Lee and Mr. Horace will be good enough to come to the Gable House and see aunty, and give us the pleasure of drinking a toast to Mr. Horace's success and prosperity, in our homely fashion, after dinner." Then the third gentleman, who had been in advance of them, was presented to us by Mr. Lee as "my son Horace, young ladies;" and my uncle's invitation having been accepted, we all proceeded homeward. The two elders resumed their talk immediately, and chatted together all the way. But we young ones walked shyly side by side in silence, until we reached the old iron gateway of the Gable House.

That was the first time I ever saw Horace Lee.

CHAPTER IV.

It is difficult for me now, to separate that first impression from my subsequent knowledge of Horace, but I am nearly sure that I liked him from the first, although he was shy and silent, and a little stiff, perhaps. I remember, quite certainly, feeling pleased (though I should have been puzzled to say why) that the younger Mr. Lee was not very like his father. Just the colour of the bluish-grey eyes, and the crisp curliness of the hair, were alike in the two. But Horace had not his father's massive jaw and coarse mouth, and he had altogether a gentle wistful kind of expression when his face was in repose, which I supposed he inherited from his dead mother.

Uncle Gough stepped forward, and led the way beneath the porch of famous memory, and into the hall; and we four, Anna and I and the two Mr. Lees, followed in a somewhat pell-mell fashion. But I noticed that when we came to the dining-room door, and my sister and I paused an instant, old Mr. Lee pushed on, in his pompous self-absorbed way, and entered before us; and that a slight look of

annoyance came across the young man's face as he drew back with a formal little bow, to allow us to pass. Dear Aunt Gough was the soul of hospitality, and I believe if uncle had brought home half Willborough to dinner, she would have felt no more regret than might be occasioned by anxiety lest they should not all be comfortable and well provided for. She looked a little surprised when Mr. Lee walked in, for he had never been on intimate terms at the Gable House; but she welcomed him and his son with the sweet simple kindness that cannot be counterfeited. And then, during dinner, we heard how it was that Mr. Horace was in Willborough, and what uncle had meant by speaking of a toast to his success and prosperity.

"Mr. Lee's son is coming to settle among us here, old woman," said my uncle to my aunt. "He has been studying engineering and land-surveying away in Birmingham, with Mr. — Mr. —"

"Topps," said the elder Mr. Lee, seeing that uncle paused for the name. "Topps. A very eminent man, madam. Very eminent man. And expensive, very expensive. But eminence is ever expensive." The old gentleman looked round, as though he had said something highly gratifying, and expected us to appear pleased. Horace kept his eyes on the tablecloth.

"Yes," resumed my uncle, "Mr. Horace has been studying with Mr. Topps. I am sure that Mr. Horace has profited by his opportunities; and his course of study being now finished, I am glad to say he is coming to give us Willborough folk the advantage of his skill."

"I have bought him a share in the old-established business of Phillips and Rotherwood," put in Mr. Lee. "Mr. Phillips is about retiring, and there is an opening for a young man with moderate capital and a good connexion. I consider that I have done my duty by my son, in keeping before him from boyhood the advantage of a good connexion. And, if I may be allowed to say so, I think he will find a good connexion ready to receive him, and to respect him—for his father's sake."

"No doubt of that, sir," said Uncle Gough, after so short a silence that there scarcely seemed to have been a pause at all: "and to like him for his own."

Horace looked up at my uncle then, and thanked him with a smile so bright that it seemed to light up his face as if a ray of sunshine had fallen on it.

After that, we girls went away with my aunt, and left the gentlemen over their wine. They did not remain apart very long, for the Lees had a ten-mile drive to their home, and the days were shortening already at the approach of autumn. They came into the morning-room where we were sitting, to take leave of my aunt. Old Mr. Lee was a good deal flushed, and had been doing justice to my uncle's cellar. That was no uncommon circumstance in those days, but it was one we were unused to, for James Gough was the most temperate of men.

"Won't you stay and drink a dish of tea, sir?" asked my aunt, hospitably, though she looked a little fluttered as Mr. Lee took her hand and glared at her solemnly. He was not intoxicated, but he had taken enough to make him more prosy and pompous than usual.

"I thank you, madam, but 'tis a beverage I never partake of, and we are pressed for time. My horse and gig are awaiting us at the Blue Bell, but I could not depart without expressing my best thanks for your hospitality. Horace, why do you not join your acknowledgments to mine? I am surprised at your negligence."

"Oh, pray!" said poor aunt, quite earnestly, "I'm sure there's no need, none in the world. It's a great pleasure to us to have entertained the young gentleman in our homely fashion."

"But there is need, madam," persisted Mr. Lee. "There *is* need; pardon me for contradicting you, but I am a great stickler for the observance of those polite forms which—which—gild the wheels of life. Likewise, I was brought up in the observance of the utmost courtesy, especially towards the gentler sex. You may deem me punctilious and over-precise, young man, but in my day it was thought no part of good manners to leave a lady's house without a parting compliment. Courtesy, courtesy and consideration for the fair sex, even in the most trifling matters, has been my rule through life."

I couldn't help thinking of the little scene at the dining-room door, and I had an uncomfortable idea that Mr. Horace was thinking of the same thing, and I felt my cheeks grow provokingly scarlet. Mr. Lee went on some time longer, and made quite a speech, which, however, seemed to be spoken rather at us than to his son; but at last it came to an end, and he took a dignified leave of me, and an admiring one of Anna, paying her several high-flown compliments, which she received very graciously and with much self-possession. Horace made each of us his stiff little bow. I fancy his father's paternal admonition had not tended to put him more at his ease. But no bashfulness could have helped thawing under the influence of Aunt Gough's genial motherly manner, and the young man took her hand, and bade her farewell, quite cordially.

"I hope we shall see you at the Gable House very often," we heard my uncle saying, as he accompanied his guests down-stairs. "You'll be a neighbour, you know, Mr. Horace. If you can put up with humdrum old-fashioned folks like us, you will always find a warm welcome and a cool tankard."

I have been sure since, that old Mr. Lee had accosted my uncle that market-day, and introduced his son to him, expressly that he might receive some such invitation, and secure a footing in the Gable household. I know not if he had any further plan in his mind at that time; but it was of itself no trifling advantage to a new comer in Willborough to be known as a welcome guest at the Gable

House: an advantage which the baronet's steward was very sensible of, notwithstanding his boasts about his good connexion. We had never been honoured by so much of Mr. Lee's company before that day, and I think we were all tacitly agreed that it was a luxury we should not care to indulge in very often. But my uncle had taken a liking to the son, and said over and over again, "He's a nice lad. A well-looking lad, and well-mannered, though he's strange among us as yet. But where in the world he gets his shyness from, the Lord knows! His mother must have been a gentle creature. I never knew her; but he looks like a lad who has had a nice mother."

The autumn days grew shorter and shorter, the faint smell of dead leaves was in the air, and the pale evening sky, pricked here and there with a spark of tremulous lustre, began to show the delicate tracery of leafless boughs relieved against its faint western yellow. By that time, Horace Lee was as familiar an apparition beneath my uncle's roof as old Stock himself. His shyness wore off as he grew intimate with us, and we found him to be a most pleasant companion, with a vein of almost boyish fun and merriment which especially delighted my uncle. A closer bond of good-fellowship between them revealed itself accidentally. James Gough was a north-countryman by birth and family. I cannot now explain—if, indeed, I ever did rightly know—what vicissitudes of fortune had brought him to dwell in our southern county; but I know he kept a warm corner in his heart for all that belonged to his dear Border land, and retained a clannish interest in his own far-away kinsfolk, even to cousins thrice removed. And, behold, one day it came out that Horace Lee's mother had been a Northumbrian, born and bred within twenty miles of my uncle's native place! Here was a pleasant discovery! Uncle Gough was never weary of questioning Horace about his dead mother, and rubbing up his own reminiscences of her family, the McNaghtens, until he ended by persuading himself that he must have known Mrs. Lee in early youth, though I am afraid it was inexorably proved by dates and figures that he could never have seen her. He would sit and talk for hours of the wild moorlands and the heathery solitudes he had tramped through when a boy, relating one adventure after another, until the northern burr would come back to his tongue, and the boyish sparkle into his eyes, and he would bid Anna sing some old Border ballad, and would sit listening with closed eyelids to her fresh thrilling tones, while his heart lived over again the days of auld lang syne, and the tears stole unchecked down his dear honest face.

Horace, too, would listen, charmed and attentive. Anna, who loved excitement and admiration as much as most girls conscious of their beauty, and accustomed to receive praise in no stinted measure, never threw so much power and pathos into her voice, or so much expression into her changing face, as when Horace varied the monotony of her home audience and

added novelty to the chorus of our familiar praises.

CHAPTER V.

MISS WOKENHAM was a frequent guest at this time at our fireside. She had made a confidence to us, and imparted a great piece of news, which we received half with pleasure and half with pain. The pleasure was occasioned by the hope that she would be happy, and the pain by the thought of losing her. Miss Wokenham was going to be married! And her husband was to take her out of Willborough, out of England, out of Europe, away across the salt sea as far as North America. I well remember the day when she first broke the news to us, and the comical struggle between crying and laughing which twitched her face all the time she was telling it. It was the afternoon of a half-holiday, one bright October day, when she walked into the parlour where Anna and I were sitting with Aunt Gough, who was half asleep over a perfect Arachne's web of fine-drawing. "Well, my mild-eyed Philosophy," said Miss Wokenham, greeting me with a kiss, which I had to stoop down to receive. (Almost every one of her pupils she distinguished by a nickname. Mine was Philosophy. Anna she always called Will-o'-the-wisp. "Well, mild-eyed Philosophy! And how are you? And how is dear aunt? I need not ask how *you* are, Will-o'-the-wisp, flashing and beaming brightly enough to lead a whole legion of unwary travellers astray, and mischievous enough to enjoy their flounderings in the bog afterwards.")

She had always a quick lively manner; but she now spoke more rapidly than usual, and I, who knew her well, was certain she was fluttered and excited. She proved me to be right after a minute or two, when, seating herself on a broad low cushion just by Aunt Gough's knee, she clasped her hands tightly together, and said, abruptly, "I'm not used to tell lies, and I find I can't even act one well. It's of no use my coming in with a swagger and pretending to be quite at my ease; for I'm not at my ease, and you know I'm not at my ease; and I know that you know I'm not at my ease. I've come on purpose to tell you something, Mrs. Gough, and, as the dear girls are here, they may as well stay and hear it too, for they must know it sooner or later." She stopped an instant; but, seeing my aunt was about to speak, held up her hand to beg for silence, and went on with a plunge. "I am going to be married, and I know everything that can be said about the absurdity of such a step at my time of life. But I've balanced the disadvantages of living and dying a solitary lonely woman, without a human being to comfort me in sickness or sorrow, against the disadvantages of being laughed at for an old fool who threw away herself and her savings on the first frog-eating Frenchman who chose to hold up his finger to her, and I've come to the conclusion that I can endure ridicule in good company better than dreary old age by myself. So there's my great news, my dears,

and you needn't put any restraint on the expression of your feelings."

I never heard any one observe that Aunt Gough was remarkable for tact; but she certainly had a way of doing and saying the right thing at the right moment, which fell like soothing balm on the feelings of those around her. She was what it is now the fashion to call "sympathetic," in a greater degree than any one I have ever known. When little Miss Wokenham had finished her speech, and sat panting with her mouth twisted into a strained smile, and her bright black eyes brimming with tears, my aunt took her small hand gently in her own, and, patting it soothingly, said in her soft slow way, and without a trace of surprise in her voice: "And very good news it is, too, and a very sensible woman I think you for bringing it. And who is to be the good man, my love?"

The little woman jumped up and put her arms round my aunt's neck; giving way now to a gush of tears.

"That's the phrase," she said. "The very phrase, you dear, kind soul! I have been puzzling how I should call him—not in my own thoughts, you know, but to other people; and I felt that my lover, or my betrothed, was out of the question. Even husband gave me a kind of shock. It's so late to begin, you know. But 'good man,' that is the very phrase! Cozy and prosy, and yet kindly. And you don't think me a weak old idiot, do you?"

By-and-by the little woman calmed down and received our congratulations with her usual sensible self-possession. Then, by degrees, she told us the story of her wooing.

"It's M'sieu' de Beauguet, the French master—Old Bogie, you know, girls. I shall be Mrs. Old Bogie. Won't that be a good name for me? I'm sure I never thought of such a thing all the years I've known him, though we were always on the best of terms, until, about a month ago, he came to me and told me that he had had an unexpected piece of good fortune. 'I'm honestly glad of it, M'sieu'," said I; 'for I have a great respect for you, and I'm sure you deserve a smile from Fortune after bearing her frowns with such gallantry. But all the world knows how natural cheerful bravery is to a Frenchman.' My dears, I knew he had been very, very poor, and had fought a hard fight without asking aid from any one. So it was not a mere flourish on my part. He made me a grand bow, and said, 'I accept the compliment for my nation, mademoiselle, not for myself.' And then he told me that a distant relative, from whom he had had no expectations, had died in Canada, whither he had emigrated many years ago, and that this distant relative had left a small property and a farm near Quebec to his second cousin, Louis Auguste Philippe Emile de Beauguet. I wrote the names down afterwards, and that's how I remember them so glibly. And then he said that he had resolved to give up teaching and to go out and settle in Canada, where there was quite a colony of his country people; and he

was full of his plans and hopes. He didn't say a word about—about me—then. After he was gone, I don't mind owning that I felt much depressed. I was glad of his good prospects, really glad; and yet the idea of his going away all that distance, set me thinking how all those to whom I was attached, had other and stronger ties in the world—how the girls I had loved and taught grew up and passed out of my ken, generation after generation, vanishing away to be bright and pretty and clever in their distant homes, without a thought of their poor schoolmistress growing old by herself in her solitude. And I could not help thinking how other women took root, as it were, in the world, and bore fruit, and flourished into a green old age; whilst I stood alone, like some cold bare rock that had no beauty and little use, and must some day topple down and lie unregretted where it falls. I worked myself into such a dismal desolate frame of mind—more shame for me!—that I sat huddled up by the fire, crying and sobbing like a fool, when my little servant Kate came bouncing into the room—you remember, Philosophy, my love, that we never *could* teach her to knock at the door—and brought me a great square letter, sealed with a coat of arms as big as a cheese-plate. It was from De Beauquet, of course. I'm not going to repeat it to you, don't be afraid, though I do know it by heart"—here a faint pink flush came over Miss Wokenham's delicate pale face—"but I may say it was a good letter, a very good letter. He said he felt alone in the world. He had been exiled from his country and all he held dear in it, for so many years, that France was more like a beautiful dream to him than a reality. He said a great deal more than he need have done about generous kindness and delicate sympathy on the part of your humble servant. I'm not going to pretend that I was not gratified; but he gave me more than my due, ten thousand times over. And then at last he said that if I would—there!—would cast in my lot with his, and go abroad with him, he would undertake that I should never repent my confidence. I took a week to consider about it, though I *think*—upon my word I am not sure—that my mind was made up from the first. And the end of it is that I've promised Lewis to take him for better, for worse, and to be a faithful kind companion to him, as well as I know how, so long as I have life and strength, and longer!"

After that day Miss Wokenham was a great deal at the Gable House. She had many preparations to make, and not too much time to get ready in. They were to be married in Liverpool, and to sail from that port in a merchantman bound for Quebec. Monsieur de Beauquet had arranged all that. My aunt was a perfect mistress of the craft of needlework, and Anna and I were fairly creditable scholars of so accomplished a teacher. So we all three were able to be useful to our old friend, and were happy to be allowed to help in the preparation of her wardrobe. The year was drawing to a

close by this time, and we stitched our way through the very core of the winter. Anna was a better sempstress than I, and her rapid fingers did good service in the manufacture of caps and aprons, and such other sober decorations as Miss Wokenham thought becoming her years. I worked neatly, but slowly; and our shrewd little bride elect was wont to say, "You're both dear, kind children; but, on a stitching emergency, give me Anna! Philosophy, with the very best intentions, stops at every cross-road to deliberate which turning she shall take. Will-o'-the-wisp keeps moving and does get over the ground, even though it be after a somewhat zig-zag fashion."

One cold bleak day we had all been busy in the morning-room from an early hour. When, in the sudden dusk, Miss Wokenham folded up her work and prepared to go homeward, my aunt stopped her, and insisted that she should stay to take tea and see my uncle.

"Horace will be here too, by-and-by," said Aunt Gough:—"young Mr. Lee, that is; but he seems so much one of us now, that I give the lad his christian name as natural as possible. And both of them will be so glad to see you."

"I should like to stay very much, but—but M'sieu' is to walk and meet me this evening, on the way home, and perhaps he'd be disappointed if I was not there."

"Perhaps he would?" echoed Aunt Gough. "Why, of course he would. But I will send some one to him with my respects, to say that you are here, and that I expect him to tea, if he will do us the pleasure of coming without ceremony."

Thus tempted, Miss Wokenham remained; and in due time "M'sieu'" arrived. We had seen him since the announcement of his engagement to our old schoolmistress, he having made a formal visit to my aunt, and having been presented by his affianced with all due observance and punctilio. But on this occasion he came on a more intimate footing, and without the panoply of etiquette and ceremony which it had pleased him to assume at first. "M'sieu'," without his mail of proof, was a very genial simple creature, with more of youthful freshness and romantic chivalry than I have often seen remaining in dashing cavaliers of half his years. He was a handsome man of fifty, with high clear-cut features, a florid skin, and the bluest of blue eyes.

"I take it very kind of you, Mr. Bogie," said my aunt, thus pronouncing his patronymic in all simplicity and good faith: "very kind, that you should have come to us in this friendly way, and I hope you'll be able to make yourself comfortable among us."

M'sieu' was at home in a minute.

"Ah, Elise!" said he, sitting cozily beside Miss Wokenham in the glow of the firelight, "dese is de scenes dat makes us ruggerret to leave England."

"Yes, indeed," she replied; "I can't commend your grammar, but your sentiment is

mine exactly.—I shall never get him to talk good English, Mrs. Gough, no more than he will ever teach me to pronounce good French; and *that's* speaking pretty strongly, as you would know if you had ever heard my attempts."

"She speaks very well, Madame," interrupted her bridegroom elect. "She can say 'oui,' and 'je t'aime,' and dat's so much French as I ask of her."

While we were laughing at this, and Miss Wokenham was protesting, with unnecessary vehemence, that she never said "je t'aime" to *him*, and was declaring that her friends would think she had taken leave of the last remnant of her senses if he went on in that way, my uncle and Horace Lee entered together.

"I picked up this young gentleman on my way home from Otlands; or, rather, he picked up me, for I was afoot, and he driving in Rotherwood's gig. He has been surveying, and measuring and tramping through ploughed fields with a chain round his middle, or some such adornment, and——"

"—And he is not fit to come into the presence of ladies, Mrs. Gough," said Horace, finishing my uncle's speech. "But there was no refusing. You know how positive your lord and master can be on occasion."

"She know!" said my uncle, with a laugh. "O the sweet simplicity of three-and-twenty! As if a man was ever positive with his wife! But there, laddie, run to my room—you know the way—and polish yourself up before the candles come. No one has seen how you look yet."

It was quite dark, except just within range of the deep red glow from the hearth; for we all loved the dreamy fitful firelight, and had sat talking by it until the faint grey ghost of day, peeping in at the windows, had melted into the dense blackness of a winter night.

"Where's Nanny?" asked my uncle, suddenly, when he was seated in his arm-chair, enjoying a tankard of hot mulled wine which Aunt Gough had prepared with her own hands. Aunt was busy now, spicing a similar jorum for Mr. Lee, to warm him after the cold ploughed fields. "Where's Nanny? I haven't set eyes on her bonny face to-day."

She had been in the midst of us when they entered, but had vanished.

"Mademoiselle Anna was nearest de door when Monsieur Gough and Monsieur Lee came in, and she sl-slapped away wizout one word. I rummarark it," said M'sieu'.

"Slapped away! My goodness, Lewis! slipped, you mean—slipped away," cried Miss Wokenham, with comical consternation.

"Ah bien, slept," said De Beauguet, with perfect good humour, smiling round on us all: "she slept away quite quiet."

"We'll wake her up, wilful baggage!" said my uncle, who could not bear to miss Anna's bright face from the home circle, even for a moment. But almost as he spoke, the door opened, and my sister came in, followed by Horace Lee. "Why, whither did you two run

off together?" asked Uncle Gough. "Come here, sauce-box. This is a warm reception to give the master of the house, to run away as soon as he shows his face!"

"I overtook Miss Anna on the stairs as I was coming down, sir," Horace Lee explained, as he drew his chair up to the fire, next mine. I looked at my sister, and noticed that she had been to her room, to put on a scarlet ribbon which she sometimes wore in her dark curls, and which she had tied very archly and becomingly over one ear. Miss Wokenham, whose observation was singularly keen, noticed the ribbon too, but said nothing. Only I saw her watching Anna, with a curious intent look in her eyes, all the evening. After all, the little harmless bit of coquetry was nothing very wonderful, especially in Anna, who made no secret of the pleasure she took in her own good looks. She was very handsome. And as she sat on the soft white rug at my uncle's feet, with her pretty round arm leaning on his knee, and her animated face flushed and smiling, I thought I had never seen a bonnier sight, even in a picture. So thought uncle too, for he sat looking down upon her with a smile of positive enchantment.

"Sing us a song, Nanny," he said at last. "Let M'sieu' hear one of our Border ditties. Not scientific music, you know, M'sieu', but simple old songs, where the words and the tune seem to belong to each other, and to grow out of each other like the leaf and blossom of a flower. Sing us 'Sir Patrick Spence,' Nanny."

"Not if you call me Nanny," said she, pouting. "For my part, I don't know what is the use of one's godfathers and godmothers giving one a pretty name, if it's to be uglified into Nan and Nanny. I'd as soon be called Sukey."

"But pretty names are for pretty people. Don't you know that, Nanny? Well, there! Anna then. Don't flame up like a volcano, but sing us 'Sir Patrick Spence,' my bairn."

But Anna was ruffled, and would not sing Sir Patrick Spence, or any other song. Her temper was very capricious, and had been pampered by constant indulgence. My aunt and uncle began to coax her in their gentle loving way, and Monsieur De Beauguet added a polite hope that Mademoiselle would give him the great pleasure of hearing her charming voice; but she only shook her rich ringlets, and kept her eyes obstinately fixed on the floor.

"You ask her, Horace," said my uncle, on a sudden. "Try if she won't sing for you."

Horace was sitting silent beside me, and had not seemed to hear the discussion. He had a very absent way with him sometimes, and he sat playing with a little hair chain, twisting it round and round his fingers. It was mine. I wore it round my neck, supporting a gold locket which contained some of our dead parents' hair. Anna and I had each one alike. The clasp of mine had come unloosed, and it had fallen on the carpet. I did not replace it at once on my neck, and Horace took it up from the table

where I had laid it, and sat twisting it as I have said. He started when my uncle spoke, but leaned forward directly, and said, "O, I beg pardon. Pray do sing, Miss Anna."

"What shall I sing?" she asked, softly, lifting her head a little, but keeping her eyes cast down.

"There! You see you have succeeded, Horace," said my uncle. "I thought you would." But he looked surprised, and just a little hurt.

"Won't you sing what your uncle asked for?" demanded Horace.

"No. I'll sing the Yellow-haired laddie," answered Anna, decisively. She was just about to begin, when she glanced up at him, and stopped.

"Where did you get Margaret's chain? Put it down. I hate to see you twisting things backwards and forwards in your hands; it fidgets me to death."

Horace laid it down without a word, and there was a minute's silence. It was broken by Anna's clear vibrating tones, as she burst into an old legendary ballad, the name of which I have forgotten (it was not the Yellow-haired laddie), but which was wild, and fierce, and stormy, and which she sang with amazing power and passion. As the last note thrilled through the room, she rose and went away without a word of good night to any one, shutting the door sharply behind her. We were well used to her capricious moods, her sudden alternations of cloud and sunshine; but there was something strange and oppressive in this.

When our three guests bade us good night, intending to walk part of their way home in company, Miss Wokenham lingered behind with me, while De Beauguet and Horace were wrapping themselves to face the cold, in the hall. Aunt and uncle were both standing just outside the sitting-room door, and the maid had been sent to fetch Miss Wokenham's hood and mantle; so my old schoolmistress and I were alone together. She knelt up on a chair, and putting her two hands on my shoulders as I stood before her, looked earnestly into my face.

"I wonder," she said, slowly, "I wonder if my Philosophy is only a fair-weather sailor! I wonder whether her courage would rise into her head, or sink into her heels, if, all at once, in the midst of a prosperous voyage, favouring gales, halcyon seas, and the rest of it, she were to hear the warning cry, 'Breakers ahead!' " Then with a rapid change to her ordinary brisk manner, she added: "Why, what a sweet sage Margaret it is! You mustn't look so pale, my child. Good night! God bless you." And she was gone.

I hunted, before going to bed, for my hair chain. The locket was there, safe on the table, but I could not find the little guard that it used to hang upon. This vexed me rather, and Anna's unreasonable humour grieved me. I did not like her to be harshly judged by others, as I felt afraid she would be. I lay awake a

long time. But all the while, Miss Wokenham's words ran uneasily in my memory, like a haunting tune: "Breakers ahead! Breakers ahead!"

MR. WHELKS IN THE EAST.

A VISIT to some of the minor places of amusement at the east end of the great world of London, has proved to us that Mr. Welks of distant Whitechapel is a more civilised being than Mr. Welks who lives, under the shadow of the august towers of Parliament and the venerable abbey, in the New Cut, Lambeth. The surprising fact illustrates an old saying which we will put this way: The nearer to the Queen, Lords, and Commons, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Dean and Chapter—the further from all that is elevated, refined, well ordered, and Christian-like. Would it startle any one very much, if we were to express the opinion that Christian Mr. Welks in Whitechapel derives a good deal of his superiority as a well-regulated citizen from his association with those benighted and "parlously" situated people, the Jews? Perhaps it would. Nevertheless, we make bold to express that opinion, and we hold by it very decidedly. In all they do, whether in the pursuit of business or in the pursuit of pleasure, the Jews are an earnest, methodical, aspiring people. If at times they live the life of the grub, it is that they may come forth presently as the butterfly. If they wallow in the gutter, it is not because they love the mud, but that they may dredge the gold out of it. There is an innate feeling of pride in the race, which inspires even the humblest rag-gatherer with a desire to reach a higher sphere. They are sober and self-denying, prudent and careful. But while in their long hours of labour they slave and drudge in the shabbiest garments, when the time for amusement comes they make themselves magnificent. Their ceremonial law teaches what we polite Christians call etiquette to the commonest man of the tribe. They are a people who wash their hands and anoint their heads, and pay respect to times and seasons and observances. The character of Jews has too long been wronged by Christian communities. We take old-clothes men and thieves—there being none such among Christians, of course—as the types of an ancient, refined, and charitable people.

The general aspect of the swarming population of Whitechapel is in a marked degree different from that of the New Cut. Their condition is about equal, but the Whitechapel mob is more active and business-like, more vivacious, and less disposed to yield to the force of unfavourable circumstances. There are signs of meanness in both places, but Whitechapel bears up with a better spirit than the New Cut. The current of life in the East, though a little muddy, runs briskly, and in so doing in a measure purifies itself; in Lambeth it stagnates, and grows fouler in consequence. Mr. Welks of the New Cut, when his work is over, lounges in an

uncleaned condition with his back against a wall, listless, purposeless, and sodden. Mr. Whelks of Whitechapel smartens himself up so that you would scarcely know him, and, with a pin in his stock, and occasionally a ring on his finger, goes forth gaily to enjoy himself. It can scarcely be said that there is anything in the atmosphere of the East-end, or in any superior condition of the dwellings there, to account for this more wholesome spirit. We ascribe it mainly to the example and influence of the Jewish population. It is well known that the Jews are fond of gaiety and display, that they have a great taste for music and the entertainments of the theatre, and that they love to wear fine dresses and ornaments. What more natural than that a different people, with whom they work shoulder to shoulder, should take example by them and learn their ways? The moral influence of dress, even if it do not include a clean shirt, is wonderful. There is always hope for a poor man when he takes some pains to make himself smart after the labours of the day.

A remarkable instance of that stimulating influence which we ascribe to the example of the Jewish people is presented to all Whitechapel at the door of one of its temples of the drama. The place was formerly a saloon, or singing-room; it is now a theatre duly licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. It is attached to a large public-house, and may be approached through the bar. Entering, the other evening, and advancing to the pay-place, we found that receipt of custom occupied by the lessee and responsible proprietor. There he was, in a working-day suit of clothes, taking money and giving checks, and there he remained until the place was full. By-and-by, when Mr. Whelks came out to the bar for a whiff of air and a drop of drink, after the first stifling and dry piece, he saw behind the bar the money grub of the pay-box transformed into a butterfly of the gayest variety—a perfect Solomon, in all the glory of a white coat, a white hat, patent leather boots, an anchor-cable gold chain, and rings and studs blazing with diamonds. Solomon in all this glory is not above serving Mr. Whelks with a pint of porter, and saying a civil word to him as he tosses his twopence into the till. Mr. Whelks has a great respect for a man of this sort. Those fine clothes and brilliant gems, got as he knows by labour, fire him with emulation.

The prices of admission to this theatre are very low, ranging from a shilling down to threepence; but the threepenny people here were better dressed, tidier, and more orderly and attentive, than the sixpenny people in the New Cut. There was no whistling in the gallery, for the reason that there was no gallery in the usual sense of the word. Mr. Whelks and his family for their threepences had the best places in the house, in a large amphitheatre formed in that part of the building usually devoted to a beggarly account of empty dress and upper boxes. The rest was pit and stalls. There was not a single box in the place. This is the only theatre of the

class where we have found the stalls well filled. There were gloves in those stalls, elegant striped dresses, and dandy bonnets of the latest fashion worn by honest women. As to Mr. Whelks, he behaved remarkably well, except that he *would* smoke, contrary to strict prohibition.

In its internal construction this theatre is well adapted to its purpose, but it is sadly deficient in light, and the pieces presented on the stage, the acting and the scenery, are by no means calculated to inspire Mr. Whelks with cheerfulness. Here, as elsewhere, the Thespian cart jolts and sticks in the old wheel-worn deeply-sunk ruts. The bill, on the occasion of our visit, promised two dramas—Britomarte the Man-Hater, and Life As It Is, or the False Friend and the Felon Brother. Still harping on the old, jangling, discordant bass string! Why, oh why, will managers persist in thinking that Mr. Whelks, who every day of his life partakes of the sad and serious things of life, should always be anxious to finish with a supper of horrors? It is true that Mr. Whelks is fond of realities, but there are other realities than robbery and murder. Life is not all crime and violence, even to Mr. Whelks. He has, as we all know, a keen appreciation of humour (is he not, in his own way, a master of chaff and badinage?), he takes great delight in music (does he not catch up every new tune as it comes out?), and yet those who cater for his amusement persistently deny him any opportunity of gratifying those simple and natural tastes. He must be dosed with the extravagant horrors of a state of society altogether beyond nature and human ken. We are persuaded that Mr. Whelks is quite equal to the enjoyment of the highest class of entertainment that can be offered to him, provided it be natural. Only give him a chance of hearing Norma well acted and well sung, and see with what rapt attention he will listen, and how gaily he will tumble down the gallery stairs humming the tunes. Show him the School for Scandal, and note how keenly he will appreciate the scandal scenes; how he will warm towards Charles Surface when he refuses to sell his uncle's picture; with what virtuously indignant glee he will anticipate the downfall of the screen and the exposure of the hypocritical Joseph!

Judging from the opening scene that Britomarte the Man Hater was likely to hold the mirror up to life as it is not, we decided to spend an hour elsewhere, and return in time to see the reflexion of Life As It Is. We adjourned to a penny gaff in the immediate neighbourhood. On our way, we had some talk with an officer of police with regard to this establishment. Were plays performed in it? Yes; last night they had played Dick Turpin. Was it licensed by the Lord Chamberlain? No. By the magistrates? No. Was it under the supervision of the police? No. How was that? The police never attended a place of entertainment unless they were paid by the proprietor. Then, the police don't look after the

gaffs? No. Who did look after them? Nobody.

The Whitechapel gaff—we believe it is the only one in the locality—is attached to a ginger-beer shop. The sole lessee and proprietor has knocked a hole through the wall of the shop to establish communication for money-taking purposes, with the narrow passage leading to the gaff. Here, in medias res, the sole lessee and proprietor, a rather magnificent personage in a white coat (the badge of Whitechapel nobility), sits on a stool, with one hand in the shop dispensing ginger beer, and the other thrust through the hole, taking admission money in the passage leading to the theatre. We paid twopence into the theatrical hand, and were bidden to ascend to the reserved seats. The reserved seats were half a dozen dirty forms in a cockloft at the end of a narrow shed. We were the first arrival in that part of the house, and, when the gentleman who played the violin emerged from beneath the stage into the orchestra and saw us, he was staggered by our appearance, and exclaimed, "Oh scissors!" He then had a long conversation with the Harp about us, and it was evidently their joint opinion that we were a suspicious character. There was not much to look at while waiting for the performance to commence. Decorative art did not extend beyond the proscenium of the little stage at the end of the shed. The walls were covered by an old and dingy paper, torn and blurred with wear and weather. On the left wall were pinned several announcements roughly written upon scraps of coarse paper. Thus: "Ginger Beer, 1d. Try our Penny Smokes;" and this important announcement:

To be sung for
NEXT THURSDAY,

A LARGE CHEST OF DRAWERS.

Take your tickets.

We had heard of singing for supper, but never before of singing for a chest of drawers. We were informed that it would be a grand competition by artists from the principal gaffs, whose respective merits would be weighed in the Philosopher's scales by a jury of the audience—the best singer to carry off the chest of drawers. Two young gentlemen in the pit were canvassing the merits of certain intending competitors, and it was the decided opinion of one of them that his favourite could sing all the others' heads off. We regretted that we had not come on Thursday to see the heads fall, in the cause of the chest of drawers.

The area of the theatre seemed to be divided into pit and stalls; for though the forms were uniformly black and dirty, through coming in contact with the evening costume of their occupants, a select half dozen of the seats were railed off from the others by a low partition. The audience here was chiefly composed of young boys, who beguiled the time until the rising of the curtain by smoking short pipes, drinking ginger beer, and chasing each other over the seats. The audience and the stage authorities

were on the most intimate and familiar terms. When it was time to light the gas, the stage manager popped his head out from underneath the stage, and said, "Who's got a lucifer?" Two or three lads in the pit immediately vaulted over the partition of the stalls, and, striking matches, lighted up the six gas-jets which constituted the whole illuminating apparatus of the house. Before the performance commenced, the top of a battered old grand piano in the orchestra was loaded with bottles of ginger beer for the consumption of the evening. When a gentleman in the pit required refreshment, a bottle of ginger beer was thrown to him over the heads of the stalls; when, later in the evening, the stock on the piano required replenishing, a fresh supply was tossed over the heads of the pit into the orchestra, where the bottles were deftly caught in bundle-of-firewood fashion by the master of the revels. Neither corkscrews nor glasses were used in getting at the contents of the bottles. The plan that prevailed in boxes, stalls, and pit, alike, was to knock the end of the bottle smartly on the seat, and, when the cork flew out (which it invariably did in obedience to a law of science connected with gas, doubtless known to the professors of the Polytechnic Institution), to apply the gushing stone fountain to the mouth. The audience were extremely friendly towards each other. No one thought of selfishly consuming a whole bottle, but on taking a pull handed it to his next neighbour, politely asking him "to have a suck." The amount of enjoyment which these Whitechapel boys managed to extract from a single penny bottle of ginger beer, was wonderful; for, when six boys had refreshed themselves with the beer, the same six boys amused themselves for some time afterwards in tossing the bottle from one to another. Short pipes were passed from mouth to mouth, like the bottles, and one pipe in particular was in great request, owing to its having a flexible mouth-piece. The possessor of this pipe was much envied. Great attention was paid to a distinguished public character, who was recognised in the pit. Every one within reach offered him a suck of his bottle and a "draw" at his pipe, and, in return for these civilities, the distinguished public character took off a decoration which he wore and handed it round for inspection. It was not the order of the Bath; rather, we think, the order of the Fleece; for it was formed of a square piece of cardboard, and bore this inscription:

I AM PARRILLIZED.

This badge of distinction was inspected with admiration, and the owner, when it was handed back to him, proudly affixed it to his breast.

The performers as they arrived passed through the theatre to their dressing-rooms. They were five in number, three gentlemen and two ladies, and their stage costume was contained in two bundles and one carpet-bag. The prima donna, in tripping along, coquettishly slapped a youthful member of the audience on the back, and called him "Joe;" and the leading man seemed

to be on familiar terms with all of them. The first part of the performance consisted of singing and dancing, and an exhibition of ventriloquism by a young man who had adapted, with considerable success, the ventriloquial entertainment of Colonel Stodare. Master Whelks, for the small charge of one penny, was treated to the gentleman on the roof, the gentleman in the cellar, and the stolid person under the chair who won't be quiet; and Master Whelks was greatly delighted, as he was bound to be. The songs were decent enough; but they were mostly about the troubles of courtship and marriage: a theme that rather anticipated Master Whelks's experience. In a stage Irishman, who came on with a caved-in hat and a short stick to sing and dance, we recognised the gentleman who had achieved the walloping-about performance for "fadges" in the New Cut. He was not so coarse and brutal here. He felt that he was before a superior audience. His habit of soliciting the encouragement of "fadges" led him, in the middle of his performance, to point to a spot on the scene, as being a good mark to aim at, but a derisive laugh from Master Whelks reminded him that he was in Whitechapel, not in the New Cut.

The dancing was worse than the singing, but both were bad enough. The boys themselves could have sung and danced just as well, at random. Thus it is, nearly always, at places of entertainment instituted for Mr. Whelks. There are a pay-place, a house, seats, lights, a stage, and persons to tread it; but what should be the purpose of all this, an artistic and pleasant entertainment, is utterly wanting. The performances at this unlicensed gaff concluded with a stage-play "comprising the whole strength of the company." It was a condensed version of the Golden Farmer; the chief elements of interest being robbery and murder. Master Whelks, however, seemed to be most entertained by the comic underplot, carried on by a rascally servant and a waiting-maid, whose costume at home and abroad was that of the ballet. The comic man was hungry. Strange to say, hunger is always comic in hungry neighbourhoods. It doesn't go for much, in the way of a joke, where the audience comes in from a six o'clock dinner of six courses. There was a great roar when the comic man said that he hadn't had anything to eat for three weeks but a penn'orth of peas-pudd'n and a fagot. The fact that the Golden Farmer can be played anywhere at this time of day is a sufficient proof of the utter stagnation of theatrical affairs. Why on earth should this absurd story be handed down through generations? Simply because in theatrical affairs there is little or no enterprise. A piece once written and acted, be it never so bad, is a piece for all time. Literature of this class in books, has long gone out; but it still remains on the stage. If Mr. Mudie acted on the theatrical principle, he would send us the Farmer of Inglewood Forest when we ask for Felix Holt, the Radical.

When we returned to the theatre the act-drop had fallen upon the first act of *Life As It Is*. The last two acts, however, were quite

sufficient to prove that the title was a misnomer. There were two heroes, George Travis and Charles Travis, twin-brothers, personated by one and the same actor; there was a heroine May Bates, "the victim of Fate." There were Chaffer, "a swell, a cheap John, and a felon;" Bob Oates, "a child of Nature, but not so green as he looks;" Patty Roselips, "a young girl from the country, rosy and rollicking," &c. George Travis is a well-to-do young man in love with May Bates, the victim, and Charles, his brother, is a seedy, dissolute fellow, on the verge of crime. The great effect created by the actor was in going off one minute as the smart George, and coming back next minute as the seedy Charles. This so puzzles the comic man, that he says Charles must be the devil or Doctor Foster, and as for their mother, she "doesn't know t'other from which." The difficulties that stand in the way of the marriage of George with May Bates, are not very clearly set forth, but they have something to do with a stony old father, who softens subsequently without sufficient cause. The difficulty in the way of the marriage of Bob Oates, the child of Nature, with the rollicking Patty Roselips, there can be no mistake about, as it is explicitly stated by Bob Oates on several occasions, that he can't get married until he has money enough to buy a four-post bedstead. Charles Travis steps over the verge of crime in an attempt to rob May Bates's father, and is wounded by a pistol-shot fired by his companion, the swell, the cheap John, and the felon. He seeks shelter with his mother, who has not seen him for years, and she, with the aid of George, ships Charles off to Australia. At the conclusion of the act, half a scene is drawn off to show a nondescript-looking vessel hopping off to Australia with the unhappy Charles. In the third act, Mr. Whelks is not a little astonished to find all the personages of the drama in Australia, including Bob Oates; who, as he is married to Patty the rollicking, and is blest with a son, seems to have made up the money and got over the bedstead difficulty. The comic man (his invariable destiny) keeps an inn. Thither comes the swellish but felonious Chaffer, who has found a large nugget of gold at the diggings. When Bob refuses him another bottle, he presents two loaded pistols at Bob's head. On the second bottle Chaffer gets drunk in half a minute—the progress of intoxication on the stage is wonderfully rapid—and wants to kiss Bob's wife, forgetting his pistols on the table. It is now Bob's turn to present the two pistols at Chaffer, who is baffled, and shrinks off without his nugget, which the virtuous Bob—now turning out not to be so green as he looks—quietly pockets. May now appears at the antipodes in the identical straw hat which she wore in England years before. She is in search of George. She meets Charles quite promiscuously on the great continent, and mistakes him for his brother. Finding that he is married, she is likely to die of a broken heart, when another mode of ending her existence is offered to her. Chaffer comes on, and for no conceiv-

able reason, except to bring the piece to a close, begins to struggle with May. When he has struggled sufficiently all over the stage, he drags May up a platform covered with whity-brown canvas—no attempt has been made to paint it—to represent rocks, and throws her among some revolving towels, representing water. He has no sooner done so than he is attacked by George, who throws him after May among the towels. Then George springs in among the towels himself, and brings May to the shore not in the least wet, she having probably dried herself with the towels; and then, when Chaffer, bobbing up his head, is shot by Bob Oates, George and May join hands and declare their happiness to be complete. The scenery was an affront even to Mr. Wheelks. Mr. Wheelks in the East deserves better things of those who, in catering for his amusement, thrive upon him remarkably well.

FORCE AND MATTER.

EVERYTHING which we behold around us may be classed into two grand categories; namely, agents, and things which are acted on by those agents. Wherever we look or turn we behold or we feel **MATTER**; which would be a dead inert unchanging substance, were it not set in motion, transformed, and vivified, by the never-ceasing influences of **FORCE**. It is Almighty Force, combined with Wisdom and Benevolence, which has moulded the universe into its present state of beauty and regularity. It is the force of chemical affinity which causes the iron to rust, and the leaf to rot, and the rock to crumble into fertile soils. It is the vibrating force of radiation which causes the sun to illumine and the fire to warm us. But for the force of gravitation, the apple, detached from its parent bough, would still hang where it was, suspended in mid-air, waiting for a hand to stretch forward and take it.

The existing state of things is therefore entirely brought about by the combination of agents and of objects acted on. The hand which holds this pen is merely matter directed by a guiding mental force. However marvellously that matter may be organised, however wonderful and mysterious may be the origin and derivation of that force, one thing is certain—that in every act and motion we have force impressing and influencing matter. We have the worker and the material; the operator and the subject; the master proceeding according to law, and the passive unresisting slave. All which constitute the majors and the minors both of the visible and the invisible worlds. Force, and its modifications, is the mighty problem which occupies the profoundest intellects of the day.

Travel in imagination to the vast and magnificent region of South America called Brazil. Penetrate the thick forests with which its soil is densely covered, and you will fall upon groups of numerous slaves busily excavating the earth, breaking fragments off the rocks, and agitating the morsels in bowls of water. From time to

time, a small pebble, apparently worthless, is carefully picked out and put aside. Hunting for this pebble, and nothing else, is the constant employment of the workmen—for the pebble is no less than the diamond, which acquires its value and brilliancy solely through the labours of the lapidary. He cuts all its facets one by one, and so brings out the luminous treasures which the rough stone held concealed.

The diamond is the image both of the human mind, and of the subjects on which it brings itself to bear. Continued efforts elicit light. And, as the diamond is capable of being polished and perfected only through the instrumentality of its own proper dust, so are learning and science the results of the friction and contact of many minds, each labouring to help the other to attain greater clearness, translucency, and faultlessness. This premised, we are reminded that we may call the substance of bodies *matter*, while *force* comprises the diverse causes which produce, in bodies, diverse manifestations, and are incessantly modifying their conditions and their properties.

Matter, then, is the substance of bodies—that part of bodies which manifests itself to our senses. By studying it, we discover that it is made up of little bits, of excessive minuteness, which are called molecules, or atoms. Bodies, therefore, consist of more or less considerable agglomerations of material atoms; which atoms are grouped together without actually touching each other, leaving between them intervals or interstices, called by philosophers “pores.” Would you have this constitution of matter acquire in your eyes the full truth of evidence? You have only to increase, in thought, those intervals indefinitely, at the same time transforming the molecules into so many worlds. You have then before you a planetary system; each molecule has become a planet, each interstice measures millions of leagues in length and breadth. But the whole system, in its integrity, is nothing but a sort of enormous body whose different portions form one whole. There is the same relation between the exiguity of the ultimate particles of matter and the interstices which separate them, as there is between the planets and the interplanetary spaces. A group of molecules, and portion of a body, may be regarded as a world. Exactly as the heavenly bodies revolve in their orbits round each other, without ceasing to keep together, so do the molecules of matter oscillate around their respective positions, without staying beyond certain limits. It is liberty restrained by law.

Professor Tyndall, in like manner, tells us that imagination must help us to understand the constitution of solid bodies; because the motion of their molecules, communicated by heat, however intense it may be, is executed within limits too minute, and the moving particles are too small, to be visible. In the case of solid bodies, while the force of cohesion still holds them together, we must conceive a power of vibration, within certain limits, to be possessed by the molecules. We must suppose them oscillating to and fro; and the greater the

amount of heat we impart to the body, the more rapid will be the molecular vibration, and the wider the amplitude of the atomic oscillations. It is the vibration of the molecules of a solid which cause its expansion when heat is applied to it. If the molecules, as is believed, revolve round each other, the communication of heat, by augmenting their centrifugal force, may be supposed to push them more widely asunder; exactly as a weight attached to a spiral spring, if twirled in the air, tends to fly away from the hand which holds it; and, as the speed of revolution is augmented, the spring stretches more and more, and the distance between the hand and the weight is increased.

When bodies are made to give forth any sound, when the fiddle-string trembles beneath the bow, when the bell vibrates at the stroke of its clapper, their atoms move in cadence, like the world in space. Between the imperceptible molecules which move within limits of infinite smallness, and the planetary globes which roll in the firmament, there is no difference. The harmony of the spheres is not an empty word. A cause keeps the molecules of a body together; the same cause prevents the heavenly bodies from parting company. That cause is a force, and it is the same force, in both cases; whether it be called cohesion when it assembles atoms, or gravitation when it groups stars in clusters.

Looking closer into the organisation of matter, we shall find that force not only forms irregular aggregations of molecules, but it works with order and symmetry. Witness the phenomena of crystallisation, to appreciate which, we need go no further than the freezing of water and the formation of snow. Professor Tyndall deftly and delicately dissects a block of ice, by means of a beam from his electric lamp: pulling the crystal edifice to pieces by accurately reversing the order of its architecture. Silently and symmetrically the crystallising force had built the atoms up; silently and symmetrically does the electric beam take them down. Here we have a star, and there a star; and as the action continues, the ice appears to resolve itself into stars, each one possessing six rays, each one resembling a beautiful six-petalled flower. By shifting the lens to and fro, new star-flowers are brought into view; and as the action continues, the edges of the petals become serrated, spreading themselves out like fern-leaves. Probably few are aware of the beauty latent in a block of common ice. Only think, continues our eloquent countryman, of lavish Nature operating thus throughout the world! Every atom of the solid ice which sheets the frozen lakes of the north has been fixed according to this law. Nature "lays her beams in music;" and it is the function of science to purify our organs, so as to enable us to hear the strain. To many persons, a block of ice may seem of no more interest and beauty than a block of glass; but, in reality, it bears the same relation to glass that an oratorio of Handel does to the cries in a market-place. The ice is music, the glass is noise; the ice is order, the glass is confusion. In the glass, molecular forces consti-

tute an inextricably entangled skein; in the ice, they are woven into a symmetric web, of the wonderful texture just described.

Snow-flakes are not less curious nor less complicated in their structure. When the cold is sharp enough to cause water to congeal, each tiny droplet that hangs in the air gives birth to a slim six-sided column terminated at each end by a six-faced pyramid. These little crystals do not remain isolated. During their descent they cluster together, so forming star-shaped groups. Sometimes six crystals only assemble round a common centre—the simplest possible form of star; but, in the majority of cases, the crystalline associations are more numerous. On the branches of the primary star, smaller crystals are regularly disposed, and on these latter smaller branchlets still. Thus the snowy star grows more and more complicated, while every additional ramification is made in obedience to the one same law.

Our great English lecturer also tells us that snow, perfectly formed, is not an irregular aggregate of ice particles. In a calm atmosphere, the aqueous atoms arrange themselves, so as to form the most exquisite figures. The snow crystals are built upon the same type as the six-petalled flowers which show themselves within a block of ice, when a beam of heat is sent through it. The molecules arrange themselves to form hexagonal stars. From a central nucleus shoot six spiculae, every two of which are separated by an angle of sixty degrees. From these central ribs, smaller spiculae shoot right and left with unerring fidelity, to the angle of sixty degrees, and from these again other smaller ones diverge at the same angle. These frozen six-leaved blossoms constitute our mountain snows. They load the Alpine heights, where their frail architecture is soon destroyed by the accidents of weather. Every winter they fall, and every summer they disappear. While they last, they assume the most wonderful variety of form; their tracery is of the finest frozen gauze; and, round about their corners, other rosettes of smaller dimensions often cling. Beauty is superposed upon beauty; as if Nature, once committed to her task, took delight in showing, even within the narrowest limits, the wealth of her resources.

To behold this force in action, you have only to watch the process of crystallisation under the microscope—a most astounding spectacle especially when seen with polarised light. Although the atoms themselves are imperceptible, you witness the rapid growth of their aggregation. Invisible soldiers form into visible battalions, arranging themselves regularly, as at the word of command. The same troops, that is the same solutions, never perform by mistake the evolutions proper to others. Alum presents itself in a mass with eight equal triangular faces; sea-salt furnishes cubes; the prisms of rock crystal are equally recognisable. Minerals have a physiognomy, which reveals the constitution of their bodies. Chemistry tells us that bodies which are similar in form are fundamentally similar; that is, if they affect the same crystal-

line form, they offer a like mode of composition.

Do not these facts betray the action of a force which directs the atoms and subjects them to its law? a sort of primordial, elementary force, animating all matter, sometimes causing a simple aggregation of the molecules, sometimes arranging them in determinate order, according to the conditions in which they happen to be placed. This force, M. Hénant informs us, is called "*la force physico-chimique*;" which does not in the least help us to understand what it is, or whence derived. All we can say is, that it must originate with the Great Artificer of all things.

Advancing with his subject, our author passes on to organic matter, where he finds himself in the presence of new phenomena. Here he confidently rushes on, where abler men, without exactly fearing to tread, proceed with very cautious footsteps. Perhaps the temerity may be more apparent than real. Organic matter, he allows, is identically the same as inorganic. It is the same matter which in turn makes a part of minerals, vegetables, and animals; the same which forms the soil, the leaves, the fruits, the arteries, and the brain—thus circulating through a hundred different organisations. This agrees with the teaching, that the matter of our bodies is exactly that of inorganic nature, and that there is no substance in the animal tissues which is not primarily derived from the rocks, the water, and the air.

But then comes the question of Vital Force. We know that there *is* a vital force. Consider a tree, and remember that it sprung from a seed; that from that seed there simultaneously issued, both a root, which of its own accord tended downward, and a stem, which sprouted upward; and then, that this root, by the nature of its tissue, is essentially fitted to imbibe the moisture of the earth, while the leaves are equally suited to act as lungs, which is the part assigned to them in the vegetable. You mark the appropriation of the tissue to its object, of the texture of the organ to its function.

Observe now the form of the tree, and you will be struck with its persistence. While the tree is being developed, its form remains constant at every period of its life. During the whole of its existence, sometimes very long—and, what is more, during a progressive increase—the form of the tree is faithfully preserved. No change takes place in the shape of its branches, its leaves, its flowers, or its fruits. An ash never disguises itself as an elm; an olive never assumes the costume of an orange-tree. Do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? An oak-leaf is always the leaf of an oak, so long as that oak continues to live. It constantly displays an oak-leaf's colour, shape, nature, and dimensions. Whether the tree be young or old, and even if the matter of which it is constituted have been repeatedly renewed, its form suffers no modification.

The limit of stature is no less remarkable than the persistence of form. Take the poplar and the reed, though of quite different build; neither exceeds a certain height. Look at a field of

wheat; the level of the surface is scarcely broken by any inequality in the length of the stems. Finally, the duration of vegetable life, the limit of its extension in time, is not less determinate than the limit of its extension in space. There are annual, biennial, and perennial plants; perennials even seem to have each their own special span of life. Some exist for tens, others for hundreds, others for thousands of years.

Nevertheless, let chemists analyse the diverse specimens of vegetable organisation, and they will discover the same material elements, namely, those which constitute the world of minerals. The two kingdoms are constantly interchanging the same materials; the same oxygen, the same hydrogen, the same carbon, alternate, make part of minerals and vegetables. It is the same matter, so to speak, which is run into different moulds, clothes itself in divers colours, offers various outlines and dimensions. "Molecular forces determine the *form* which the vital energy will assume. In one case, this energy is so conditioned by its atomic machinery, as to result in the formation of a cabbage; in another case, it is so conditioned as to result in the formation of an oak." But the very same carbon may have entered into the chalk, into a fagot, into a flower, or into a fruit.

Like phenomena are more marked and evident in the organisation of animals. The persistence of form is more distinctly traced, the mutations of matter are more completely apparent, the phases of life more strongly characterised. Experiments made by mixing madder with an animal's food, prove that even in solid bone there is continual change of its constituent matter during the formation, the development, and the life of bones. The same takes place in every part of an animal's body. Veins, arteries, muscles, nerves, are incessantly undergoing renovation. All those organs offer the spectacle of a continual change of the matter which constitutes their substance. An accident to the skin, after a certain time, disappears through this reparative process. During youth, its action is more energetic, and its phenomena are more apparent than in old age. Nevertheless, bones ever remain bones, and arteries continue arteries. In spite of the continual change of the elements which compose an animal's body, the form of its different organs is not altered. Slight modifications may occur; but in the animal, as in the vegetable, we observe a permanence of form. The characteristic structure remains intact.

The animal grows for a certain time, after which its development is arrested. Every living being has its appointed stature, which varies only within restricted limits. It is subject to a limit of size, like that observed in the vegetable. Finally, the animal lives. It first grows, and then ceases to grow, without, however, ceasing to live. The duration of its existence is intimately connected with the duration of its development; the longer its growth has lasted, the longer will its adult life last. Nature destroys her own handiwork at a rate of slowness corresponding to that which she employed in

building it up. We again find the limit of vital duration for the animal as for the vegetable.

Notwithstanding all which, it is not a special kind of matter, but that which has already formed part of minerals, which traverses thus the frames of organised beings: drawn along, as Cuvier expresses it, in a continual vortex or current. This continual current flows in one direction, which, however complicated it may be, remains constant. While these movements of matter are being performed, while the current continues, it is evident that a force is in action. While new materials are being adapted to the body, while worn-out materials are being rejected, a force directs and regulates the incessant change. Matter plays the part of an obedient slave. Each atom is the recipient of the force, until a fresh atom comes to take its place. The permanence of the force, its unity of action, is manifested in the midst of an unceasing vortex. Matter is transient, and passes away; force remains, and is permanent.

This is the grand point to establish. Names are of very inferior consequence. M. Hénant, in his lectures on Force and Matter, calls *this* force Vital Force, holding that it is impossible to confound it with Physico-Chemical Force. The metaphysical gauntlet here thrown down, is hardly worth the picking up. At least as good an authority as M. Hénant asks, "Are the forces of organic matter different in kind from those of inorganic?" and answers, "All the philosophy of the present day tends to negative the question; and to show that it is the directing and compounding, in the organic world, of forces belonging equally to the inorganic, that constitutes the mystery and the miracle of vitality."

In meddling with Spiritual, Intellectual, or Mental force, M. Hénant takes us out of our depth, and out of his own. He is right in owning that "when we endeavour to pass from the region of physics to the region of thought, we meet a problem to seize on which transcends any conceivable expansion of the powers we now possess. We may think over the subject again and again, but it eludes all intellectual presentation. Thus, though the territory of science is wide, it has its limits, from which we look with vacant gaze into the region beyond."

SOME OLD SUNDAYS.

POETS have done very handsomely for Sunday; but all their "peaceful Sabbaths," "village chimes," and days of rest, deal with the country Sunday, or, to narrow it still more, with the village Sunday. The village Sunday, take it where we will, has the true Sabbath poetry and flavour: the old church-tower, the general festive air, the ancient chime, musical and soft, sweetened by age like old Lafitte: not raw, and sharp, and strong. A new bell, like new claret, is odious. The villagers, "virtuous" by courtesy on that day at least, have the look of stage peasants, and

the children and the women crowding to the church in their rustic finery, give a pleasant and innocent air. But in the pure country, and the country-houses, Sunday in its profaner aspect is a terribly dull day. There are the drive for the religious duties, and the service, and the sermon, and the coming home, and the criticism on the sermon, and the lunch. After that reflection, despondency and ennui set in; and if the host—and there are such hosts—be of an "improving" turn of mind (of course only as regards his neighbour), and would wish to sanctify the day in a sort of extra professional manner, there is much trial in store for the guests. There is the procession to the library, the composing of features to a decently funereal air, the breaking out of irreverence on the part of juniors during the procession, the enforced attendance of retainers, some of whom are always missing, and sheltered by confederates, and the soft gliding into the library and securing of easy-chairs; while the host in the middle—afar off at his desk—is almost for the moment transported into the belief that he is a real clergyman, and reads, at great length, in the most impressive manner. These Sundays, at devout country-houses, are gloomy to experience, gloomier to remember, and make the rising of the Monday morning's sun, when the shooting and the riding set in again, doubly welcome.

Yet gloomier still is our English Sunday in town. The whole resolves itself into the monotony of rows of shutters. Even the well-meant festive air of Sunday clothes, the almost whitewashed look of the excellent heads of families who have been labouring all the week in the heats and the dusts, and who seem to have got all hands to work to polish and "point" their surfaces, and who carry their prayer-books with a triumph and complacency (why is there more finery about prayer-books, and why are they more gorgeously gilt than other books—say spelling-books?)—even this part of the pageant adds only to the despondency. A tour of the London city churches and churchlings, as once described in this journal from an "uncommercial" point of view, would be the surest inducement to confirmed melancholy that could be discovered. There is surely some amendment wanted in our fashion of keeping Sunday. Let there be "rest" by all means, and let there be "holiness" by yet more means; but let there not be the weary unrest of utter idleness, or the starch and scraping buckram of official puritanism.

Through that gauzy curtain which hangs between us and our childish days, and which gives to them the misty charm that the same material does to tableaux vivans, I can look back and make out a Sunday or two more distinct than other Sundays set me to behold.

There has been a voyage of some three or four days and nights in a lumbering steamer of the older build—of the pre-Scott-Russell era—during which, discomfort and physical agonies of all sorts have been my childish portion; for there has been rough weather, and

the ancient craft has been heaving up and down; and the boyish mind which relished this motion a good deal on deck, as more or less partaking of "fun," hears the bell for dinner, and rushes down to enjoy the luxuries of that meal, set out at the public cost, all of which may be partaken of unchecked by maternal restraint—maternal restraint at that moment being miserable in the ladies' cabin with every other lady. The swinging of the soup-tureen was yet more fun, but not the sudden stinging that seemed to shoot through the boyish frame—that sharp megrim in the head, precursor of ignominious rout, of the wild rush for the door, the temporary relief in the fresh air, and the final striking down and more sustained agonies that went on day and night on the little shelf that was called berth, until a steward was heard betimes saying that "we were coming in," and that it was Sunday morning. There was a soft gliding motion in the old craft that told of smooth waters; there was the pattering of heels and flopping of ropes sounding overhead; presently a stoppage, then a going on, and at last wearily, and with a head that seemed as if it were a churn, with a dozen dairymaids churning hard and fast—the boy, that is now a man, crawled up the brass-bound stair, and saw that "we were in."

Sunday morning, indeed—sunny, bright, blue, glittering; no longer the weary sea all round, with its heart-sickening monotony, but a great port crowded with shipping, threads and shrouds on all sides, gay snowy white and yellow houses rising all round, busy yellow quays, crowded yellow quays, quays mixed up with a blue sea, blue sea mixed up with quays, and on the quays men all in cheerful blue cobalt frocks and scarlet nightcaps, and women with coloured petticoats and no bonnets, but in caps, and with a great deal of gold, and rather copper-coloured. It was bewildering, and, with dairymaids still churning hard, I note, with a boy's special curiosity and even interest, *in spite of* the churn, that there is a huge wheel turning on the quay, which is somehow lifting a great block of stone, and, what is more wonderful, it is turned treadmill-fashion by more men in easy blue frocks, crawling on the wheel, which at that moment appeared to me to be a most delightful mechanical operation. At this moment I have the whole of this scene, like a picture before me, and recal my placid wonder at this being Sunday morning, and such operations going on, when, in spite of the dashing of the churn, I hear some one say again that this is France, and that this gay Sunday morning scene is Havre. Then we go ashore, and look back at the heavy lumbering monster which has brought us, without pleasure or regret leave the port behind, and get down a narrow street where there are no pathways. And above this is a house that seems all mirrors, and golden clocks, and white shining doors, and gorgeous crimson-velvet chairs and sofas, on which we lie down and ease the churning head, and get

much better in reply to the affectionate question: "How do you feel now, dear?" when breakfast sets in, with a long loaf of mysterious and wonderful bread made into a gymnastic club.

This is Sunday morning in the French town. Much restored by the meal, we go out. We come to a huge yellow cathedral, all yellow aisles and altars, and innumerable long candles, and wicker chairs enough to furnish fifty houses. And all this crowded to the door; and most wonderful of all, here are a corps of soldiers clattering into the aisle, making their guns rattle on the pavement, and, wonder of wonders, their band striking up with rich effect the popular *Sonnambula* air, "*Vi ravviso.*" This was accepted with present delight, and without questioning.

Connected with that jacket (or perhaps frock era—for more correctly speaking the transition took place then) are some more Sunday mornings. I see as distinctly now, as I do the house opposite, the villa on the pleasant hill that overlooked the town, and which was the true French villa, with the green blinds, and grapes growing over it, and a garden behind, delightful of summer days. The scent of that garden comes in through the window at this moment. And in front was the great green, where there used to be terrible and sanguinary combats between English gentlemen boys and French lads in blouses (the French boys always driving at their hereditary foes' stomach with their heads, and the English boys putting those heads into chancery); and where more kites were flown in a week than in any English county in a year. A scene, in which a benevolent but dirty French master, who always said of sultry days without restraint, "*O madame! comme je sue! comme je sue!*" took secret delight, and on a disengaged evening would come and construct scientifically a gigantic kite six feet in length, with a tail in proportion. On a triumphant Sunday evening it made its first successful ascent, and rose to an enormous height above the level of the sea; it was a no less disastrous evening, though not a Sunday evening, when it suddenly broke away, and was believed to have fallen into the sea some miles off. It was never heard of again, but its loss was looked on as a public calamity; for, sinking national differences, the French boys stood and looked on in crowds whenever the time of an ascent came round. I never was so much affected as by that blow, and through the night literally roared with grief.

Across the fields, a little path led, for about a mile, to a village called Sanvic, I think, in which parish we were included. It was no more than a village, but it had its church, which aimed, as French churches do, at being cathedral-like. With Sanvic are some Sundays associated—festival Sundays, during the month of May—with great wealth of white roses, and young girls, and candles, and processions. There was a curé, a good and simple man, handsome and Italian-looking, and glistening

in that black picturesque dress of the French clergy, and who tried to learn English (but never succeeded), and who delighted in these little processions.

There was a magnificence about these pagants which never palled, and the honest rustics of the neighbourhood were never tired of doing them honour, and of putting on their best finery to that end. The stout man who blew with a will into what then seemed a black boa-constrictor that wound itself about his surplice, but what I now know to be a musical instrument called a faux-bourdon, always excited my alarm and yet interest—pleasure and terror. But pleasure unmingled was always associated with a great cake borne in the procession on a man's head—a cake, too, that was later cut up in the church, and distributed in what seemed to me discreditably shabby portions. These were charming little festivals; there was an air of innocence over them as they wound through the street and the dresses glittered, and the young girls in veils and flowers looked down on the ground, and the faux-bourdon brayed, and even the cake on the man's head looked not in the least glorified, as though knowing that in the fulness of time its merits would be acknowledged, and needed no adventitious aids. A short time ago at some profane rout, at which I found myself with a heart more rusted than it was in those days, was offered to me a cake, the very sight of which sent me searching back through all the thick mists, and fogs, and jungles of life to those bygone and innocent times. And while the fiddlers were at their work hard by, and the cornet was winding out a *Valse de Desir*, and the lovely Lydia had just swept past me, there was I abstractedly searching the mermaid caves of memory with this cake as a talisman; at last led me back to the little hill, the Côte, over the French town, and from the hill to the Sunday procession, and the great cake on the man's head. In honour of those old days, how many years ago? and perhaps to the astonishment of the polite gentlemen who waited behind me, I went and cut myself a huge *tranche* in memoriam.

I have other Sundays to think of. A Sunday, as it were yesterday, at one of the gambling towns; where the old church, which has four old Belgian round-about spires—one at each corner, of the piano-leg style of architecture—lies over against the rooms, the house of play and the house of God being close together. It was a very old edifice, with pale hock-coloured windows that eddied and rippled. And here, on this Sunday, there was a ceremony and a sermon by a preacher of distinction, who came from Antwerp, which, taken together, rather protracted the rites, until it was actually time for *Le Jeu* to begin over the way. And the weather being hot, the old organ pealed on, and came rolling in at the open windows of the gambling-house, and the hymn mixed with the cries of "*Messieurs, faites le jeu!*" and "*Le couleur gagne.*" The players did not quite relish it. It seemed like the cathedral scene in *Faust*,

where the demon's cries mix with the organ. And it seemed to me that the director thought the coincidence awkward, and had the windows put down. His theory was that his profession should be in harmony, in all respects, with the march of the age, even with the religious instincts of the day. Naturally he was annoyed.

Coming home again to fatherland, I look out through the fog for another Sunday, and find myself in a steamer coming up the great dark highway of a great river, about four in the morning; which watery road is made much more like a highway from its being dotted on both sides with long lines of lights that twinkle like stars. We have had a rough night, and signs of land are welcome. So, too, getting further on, is the tall tower with the blazing clock-face which seems to hang in the air. The waters look dark and Stygian, the air is stiff and sharp, and with a suspicion of sleet. And presently, wheeling sharply to the right, we make for a dock where there are heavy red piers massive as rocks and gates to a giant's castle, and where there are flaring lamps and shadowy men that seem to drip through the fog. Then we are put ashore, and grope darkly among sheds, and huge casks, and monster carts half loaded or half unloaded; but all dark and not discernible till one is on them. For this is a Sunday morning, and the genii that load and unload are gone and have left their work half done. Drawbridges that rumble hollowly, chains that clank, patches of Styx again glistening below, and here are the great gate and the open road and the street.

What the hour was by this time, I did not know. It was strictly no concern of mine, as I was going on by one of the many trains that doubtless left every day, this being a great commercial place. But down at the dock gates, or near the dock gates, there were no cabs: which was strange, considering what a great commercial city this was. Howbeit, a strong porter went on before, and led the way past grim streets and tall chocolate coloured warehouses, and smoking chimneys, and great funeral yards that seemed filled with coal, and long viaducts of smutty-looking arches. But all this was quiet. By-and-by we got to the railway—the London and Grand Diagonal. And now for breakfast at a good hotel—was there not one called the Grecian?—ham, eggs, and "devils" generally—a repast that seems always to harmonise with the human system on coming out of a packet. Here was certainly the London and Grand Diagonal, but all its great gates were shut. It had an air of death—very odd for so great a commercial community. What did it mean? The porter, who knew the truth, down at the dock, said he was "afear'd" that the train had gone. "You know—Sunday," he said. A railway porter appeared. "Lord bless me! First train gone a quarter before—the mail up, you know. Sunday, you see. No train till half-past ten to-night. One train o' Sundays, you see. Mail, up." Here was a blow indeed; to wait till "half-past ten" at night in *that* place—a great com-

mercial place—of a Sunday, and I panting to get on. But it was Sunday, you know.

I went to the Grecian, but the Grecian was gone, or was become the Royal Alexandra, or some such name. I went on to another place not so good. Meanwhile the daylight was coming in slowly, but the streets remained empty. Wonderful in so great a commercial place!

The hotel I had selected was a weakly and failing one. The attendance was of the limpest description. Gradually it became broad day, but at the slowest possible pace. Then was revealed the dismal coffee-room, with a discoloured gamboge paper, that looked glistening and sticky, and to which the corpses of many an indiscreet fly adhered. There were old red and decaying hangings drooping down to the ground and charged with dust. The only objects of furniture to speak of, were two framed and glazed placards, and a sauce-bottle with a brick-red label. One of the placards was the Royal Liver Marine Insurance Company, Limited, with a list of directors and an almost piteous setting forth of the advantages that society had to offer. You might sit for so many hours of the day on barrels of gunpowder, it made no difference. You might embark for the tropics, and be a bishop on the Gold Coast. Then their bonus, and most tempting examples. Thus: A. had insured in the year '45 for a hundred pounds, aged 30. This was only '55, and see what that lucky dog A. was getting already, either a bonus—at his option—of two pounds seventeen and sixpence, or, if he elected to deny himself the bonus, one hundred and twenty pounds at his death. The prospect was set before one in so many appetising ways that it seemed as if an insurer *must* come at last to long for his own death in order to reap such tempting advantages. The other placard was Messrs. Beales and Co., house-furnishing, &c., with pictures of the interior of their "vast warerooms," which seemed to be blocked up with every variety of bedstead, with a Louis Quatorze sort of foreman bowing and explaining matters to a lady and gentleman making purchases. Messrs. Beales mysteriously offered "special advantages to newly married couples" (what *could* they mean?) and to young housekeepers. There was the red label of the sauce-bottle too, which set forth that the sauce was "prepared from the receipt of a baronet in the country." I am minute about these matters, because they were the only literature in the room, and because through that long long weary day when I was driven back upon the place from sheer monotony, some horrid and unaccountable fascination drew me over to study these placards and sauce-bottle. It was Sunday, and there were no daily papers. I came at last to know the placards by heart. The names of the chairman and directors were Samuel Bullock, M.P., Decimus Bagot, William Hipper, Dowson Boglor, and Harvey

Gibson, secretary. Then Messrs. Beales and their "special advantages for newly married couples." I was not a newly married couple, nor even a moiety of a newly married couple; yet somehow I felt as if I were defrauding myself of an unknown blessing, and longed to go and order a bedstead. On another occasion I might have gone up to Messrs. Beales's establishment and seen the Louis Quatorze shopman and had the mystery explained; but this was Sunday.

It dragged on slowly. I went out through the lonely town, went down to the river, where there was a lonely steamer setting off; thought I would go in it, but reflected and came back. I went out again, and came back again. I thought it would never be done. It was a long Sunday, and the longest of Sundays. The strings of people went to church and came back. It began to grow dark, and the bedsteads and the "special advantages for young couples" faded out.

Then went I to the railway station. I found myself there towards nine, with the gas lit and the holiday people coming home. There were more bedsteads, and Messrs. Beales and their young married couples on a gigantic scale, suited to be seen from distant carriages. There was the long platform to walk up and down, and there were the cave-like coach-houses where the coaches were laid up and seemed to be snoozing. This whiled away an hour or so. It was drawing near to mail time. The mail bags were arriving, and it was amusing to watch what was done with them. The interior of the railway post-office, with its pigeon-holes and lamps, looked like the interior of a steamer's saloon or cabin, and the rueful alacrity of the employés suggested passengers going on board. Being up all night, the tossing on the blue cushions, the breaking of day, the cold shiver as the door was opened, the general "creeping" feel as we would roll into town at six, this prospect was too much for me. I shrank from it, and went back to bed in a very mouldy apartment. So the Sunday came to a close at last, and I went away betimes on Monday morning, with the sun shining brightly, and in boisterous spirits.

I have yet one more Sunday—positively the last. The scene is a charming bit of double colour, red brick and green sward on an English high road, or rather in these railway times green lane, with an old tree or two, and a belfry in the roof; and from this I start on a very bright Sunday morning, making for a semi-military, semi-nautical settlement some miles away. I have never seen the nautical-military settlement, and do not know the road, so the whole has a prospect of adventure. Adventure there was to be none; but the reader will understand how pleasantly one turns back, for reasons unmeaning as compared with the incidents of other days, to little pictures of this sort. The green lane went up and down, became a high road, with gigs and a stray waggon and a yellow van—there was a race

or a fair somewhere on the Monday—with a two-wheeled show-cart of meager pretensions; the proprietor of which walked by his vehicle in a Sunday cloak made out of the gaudy and dappled oilcloth which served on profane occasions as his roulette board. There was the blue and the red, and the less fortunate black, and the lucky crown, most gorgeous in its yellow, displayed upon the proprietor's back.

Next, I met "tidy" women, very smart, and their lords in very roomy royal blue dress-coats and brass buttons, and those extra-short double-breasted waistcoats which honest but sorely tempted children of the soil always wear in melodramas. These were distinctly *not* going to church; and I could pardon them for turning aside to the rustic inn, to which you mounted by steps, which had two bow-windows with diamond panes and plenty of flowers, and a sign well on the road, and called the Jolly Waggoner. If it were a little later, I should myself have liked to go up and make the acquaintance of the Jolly Waggoner and his ale. After three or four miles, during which the sun was growing a little strong, and the dust perhaps rather acrimonious in its visits to the eyes, the great river and bridge came in sight. And there, while the spectator leaned on the bridge and looked in every direction, was a view that might sanctify any Sunday morning. A great full river, with that most satisfactory *brimming* fullness which recalled the Rhine, and a noble bridge of many arches, hill-shaped according to the older pattern, and whose piers seemed to stand firmly and confidently in the water and to defy any winter's flood, as if they were great granite calves of legs belonging to a many-legged granite giant, who could stride down the river with ease. At the opposite side was the little old town, and the little old town's ruined castle, and the little old town's houses very much crowded, and forced down to the edge of the water. And then beyond the little old town was the nautico-military town, which climbed up a hill laid out in ancient "lines" and more ancient fosses; and beyond the hill down far below, the river had got in again and was wading under that Sunday's sun, glittering and glistening very far below, with the dock-yards at its edge and the great shipbuilding sheds—monster coach-houses, but which now looked like tiny mousetraps. A charming view until modern man stepped in to spoil all, or rather the cruel, rapacious, and ubiquitous London, At-tem and Dashover Railway, which seemed to run amuck through the country, and which hurled a heavy iron trough across the pretty river, and side by side of the pretty bridge. As I looked at its raw lines with disgust, and at its endless rivets, and heard it reverberating and clanging with a passing train, I seemed to hear it say, like an ugly bully, "I've as much right to be here as *you*. I can go beside *you*, if I like, or go any where I like!"

Going on, I entered the little old town, which is all a snake-shaped street, with old rusty inns,

and old posting-yards, and a few old framed houses; their old bones and joints well looked to and kept as fresh as paint could keep them. I liked the way they projected over and covered the pathway, and I liked their gables still more. I went out into the road to have a good stare: to the amazement of the family, who were reading their Bibles on that Sunday morning, and thought the profane stranger might be better employed. Everything looked as bright and clean as a Dutch town, even to the one policeman, who, having little to do, began an affable conversation. Taking another bend, the little old town showed me some genuine red brick houses with yellow stone corners and high French roofs—little Kensingtons, with a delightful old clock that hung out over the street in a mass of florid carving. Behind was a niche, and a flamboyant statue of a naval officer in a wig and gauntlets, pointing, I *know*, to the French—the brave old admiral Sir Cloudesley, in whose honour the red brick tenement had been reared. Further on was a famous almshouse where Six Poor Travellers did get their lodging and fourpences, and which looked snug and clean enough to make one *wish* to be a poor traveller; and further on again was the ancient little theatre, in good repair, with a portico and pillars, and some little dwindled bills on the walls by which I was glad to see that the Theatre Royal was in play. Approaching and reading with interest (much to the disgust of a sour middle-aged lady with her husband and boy, who was making uncharitable Sabbatarian remarks), I find that Mr. GEORGE JENBY, the eminent character actor and vocalist, would "give two nights," in this

HIS NATIVE TOWN.

He was to be assisted by "Miss Marion Jenby, of the London Concerts;" by "Miss Susan Jenby, of the London and Ealing Concerts;" by Mr. William Jenby on "this occasion only," who was of no concerts at all; and by "the Infant Marie Jenby." The programme was "rich and varied," including Miss Marion Jenby in her great character song of the "Battle of the Alma," which was subdivided into "The Advance, Charge of the Heavy Brigade! Quick step, they run! Prodiges of valour! The Naval Brigade; England's Wooden Walls;" the two latter headings I suspected to be specially introduced as adroit compliments to the dockyards. Wishing Jenby and his family all success, and being really worked into sympathy by the quotations concerning coming home at last, with which William Jenby ended his bill, "As the hare whom hounds and horse pursue, Pants to the spot from which at first it flew!" I passed on, and began to meet soldiers. Then I heard sounds of an organ coming out of a pretty little building, and found my middle-aged lady, her husband and boy, peeping in at the door with disgust and alarm. For doing the same, I find this to be a chapel full of Irish soldiers, which, having a stained-glass window, looked very tranquil and cool and inviting of

that Sunday morning. But if I were to tell all I saw on that pleasant Sunday morning, I should grow tedious—and so I stop here.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XVI. A VISITOR.

AFTER Mr. Tillotson's City dinner, the scene of their life moves on with a sort of monotony. But that morning seemed to have been the last of the bright unclouded days which had set in for him, and about which he had such a distrust. Those who knew him began to remark the backward motion, and saw, with pain, the clouds beginning to gather again.

Mrs. Tillotson had passed a troubled night. Before morning the conviction had grown upon her that some evil was advancing on them, and that this old mystery, so often pointed to and hinted at, might now be brought to light with danger and perhaps disgrace. Else what did it all mean? We hear men accuse themselves passionately, and tell us they are guilty sinners; but over such declaration always seems an air of exaggeration from penitence. But it is different when other men make the charges. It sounds more practical and serious. Something, too, that Grainger had said to her came back on her very often. "And did he not tell *you* at the time of the marriage? No, of course not. That you could scarcely ask *him*." From that night a weight began to oppress her, as if this might turn out to be some dreadful and destructive mystery.

When she was sitting in her drawing-room thinking a little sadly over these things, Mr. Tillotson entered a little abruptly. He was going off to his office. His old gentleness had come back. "That was a miserable night last night, and I was fretful and hasty. But I could not endure such another. Do be indulgent and pity me. We cannot have *him* coming here again, or any of his friends. I have done all I could, and can do no more."

Sweet comfort and pity came into his face; for she answered at once: "He behaved cruelly, unkindly, wickedly. No, you shall never see him any more. Indeed, I could not ask you. You have been too kind."

"I" he answered, hastily. "I have never wished to see him but for your sake. What I mean is, he must not come to this house, or be seen here. I cannot endure his insolence. I *must* ask you to agree to this. Indeed, it is not much, and only due to our own dignity."

"To be sure," she said. "And he shall never enter it; though—" She stopped suddenly and looked down; for at that moment rushed on her all the dangers of such an exclusion, and the fury which such a step would work him up to. "I think," she said, hesitatingly, "just as yet, while he is in this state, and we are the only people who have influence over him—"

After all, he is not naturally wicked, and Mr. Grainger *has* some power."

Mr. Tillotson looked at her a moment with a strange expression, then suddenly turned away. "It was not much to ask," he said, with a bitter and wounded tone. "I only can say what I wish. You can, of course, do what you please."

"What does this mean?" she said, with soft reproach; "what change is this coming on? Dearest husband, this is for *you*."

"Change!" he said, "there is no change. I only go back to my old state, the state it was folly for me to have given up. I say again, I do not wish that man or his friend to be seen here again. You are free to do as you wish."

"Anything you please," she said.

Another day went slowly by in a dreamy irresolution, until towards the afternoon Martha stood before her. "That gentleman's below again," she said. "The gentlemen visitors are coming plentifully now-a-days."

This woman had a sort of privilege, and these grim speeches were but a part of herself. But Mrs. Tillotson had an instinct who this was. "I cannot see him—see *any* one," she said. "Send him away."

She shook her head. "He will not go for *me*," she said.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Tillotson," said a voice at the door. "You will excuse me, I know; but recollect that this was part of our arrangement last night. I was at your party, and they treated me like a servant. If I went away *then*, it was only to put the matter off till this morning. Now *you* can go down," he said, turning to Martha. "What are you waiting for?"

He took a chair, then closed the door, and sat down by her. "Now," he said, "let us see our way, and let us understand each other. Dear me, how charming old England is, after all; and old London, too, above all. Only think how it must seem to a town man after fifteen years among their wretched mangy foreign places. How sick I have been of them, pining to get back here. But what could I do?"

She looked at him, wondering.

"Ask your husband the reason. He is accountable for it all, and for much more. If I had come home all that time, I should have come home a beggar; for a little allowance that was made me by a cruel mother would have been withdrawn if I had. Only fancy, an elder son, John Eastwood, of Eastwood, 'cut off,' as they call it, with two hundred a year, and his whole fine estate handed over to a younger brother, all of which madness I owe to *your* husband."

"What does all this mean?" she said, half rising. "Why do you speak to me in this way? I do not want to listen to you. You wish to assume some power over us—"

"Well, if you like," he said, rising, "I shall go straight to his bank; it will be more profitable to me, and less pleasant to you. And if you have ever heard of such a thing as a skeleton in a cupboard, I vow to Heaven your hus-

band will bring you to-day from his bank a skeleton that will haunt this house till your dying day. Give your orders, Mrs. Tillotson. I am a gentleman by birth and education, and don't want to hector or terrify you, or make terms like a vulgar ruffian. But as I live and breathe, and on my solemn honour, what I tell you is true, and that is true, it will be the most miserable day in your new-married life if I go to the bank now, and even let myself be seen by Tillotson. There."

There was such earnestness in what he said, that it brought conviction, but with a chill.

"But what is all this about?" she said, in a mournful voice. "What is this secret?"

He shook his head. "Seriously," he said, gravely and respectfully, "it would not do to tell you. You would not wish it yourself. You see, the whole is in a mess; but I cannot help it. I have had a miserable time. I have been ruined through the business and through him. As I say, I was born and bred a gentleman, and I don't want to have the looks of extorting, and having 'silence purchased,' and that sort of thing. But what can I do? As it is, I am doing wonders—for me. I suppose, if I walked to him straight, it would be the best course for me. But I don't want to make or bring confusion. I must live. If something moderate is got for me, I shall be quite content, which, recollect, all this time is *a debt*; for it was he and *his business* that brought ruin on me, and it is fair that he should make up for it. In fact, I have behaved with the greatest delicacy all through. I thought for years that he had become only a poor clerk in a bank. Judge of my astonishment when I heard that he was a millionaire rolling in wealth. Well, now, to business, Mrs. Tillotson. What can you do for me?"

When he was gone, she thought of her unfaithful resource. She hurried to the dear captain. The captain looked very grave. "Well," he said, "of course, there could be no harm in that, you know. Poor Tillotson has had so much misery and worry in his short life, that, egad, I'd give a few guineas myself to get him peace. No, we mustn't let this fellow see him; not that we mind his old woman's stories, you know, but just for peace sake. I tell you what," said the captain, as if a brilliant discovery had come to him, "leave it to me; put it into my hands *altogether*. If there's a man in the world who can deal with fellows of that sort, I can. Don't say a word more," said the captain. "I'll make the rhino go twice as far as you would, my dear. It doesn't do for you to be mixed up in such a business; not that there's anything in it. But, after all, peace and quiet is better than gold. Now, what is he to get? Leave it all to me. I'll go off and see him at once."

Not without serious remonstrance and danger of an entire rupture of the business did the captain agree to any assistance; as to the pecuniary part, she brought down her little store. With a hundred or a hundred and fifty the captain

said he'd manage the whole thing "easy." Grief and terror again came into her face. But two or three days before her husband had given her fifty pounds "to pay for pins and ribbons."

"Leave it to me, my dear," said the captain. "We can put fifty to the back of it easy. It'll do splendidly." But to this she would not agree, and so it was at last agreed—as she insisted—that on that night she would send the captain more money.

CHAPTER XVII. MRS. TILLOTSON RAISES MONEY.

NEXT day their usual cold formal ride took place. With some constraint and confusion, Mrs. Tillotson said: "I know you are so good to me always, and so indulgent, you never refuse me. I have been very extravagant—no, not that—but I am going to be very extravagant, and I would have you to help me—will you?"

Some of the old pleasure came into his face. "I am delighted," he said, "that you come to me in this way. This is what I like. When we get home, we shall settle how large it shall be; and to-morrow we shall drive to the bank together."

But as he rode, and before they got home, he grew silent. He was always all but thrusting money on her, and nothing so delighted him as the rare occasions when she had come to him. But it was only two days ago that she asked for money, and now she asked again. And over this he began to grow silent and to brood; and by the end of the ride, when he was lifting her off her horse, he had built on it a mountain of suspicion, and sadly converted what he had hailed with delight into a fresh source of disquiet.

Just before dinner she came in to him. "If you could spare it to me now," she said, with a smile. "I have heard you quote some Latin about *bis dat*."

"To be sure," he said, fetching out his cheque-book. "How much?"

"A great deal," she said, "a very great deal. I am ashamed to name it."

"Nonsense," he said, writing. "This," he added, looking at her, "is some pressing fellow, or Madame Adelaide. Why do you let them press you?"

"No," she said, hastily; "this is a private little extravagance—a secret, a very great secret. We all have our little debts, or, I mean, expenses."

He then said, abruptly, "How much?"

"Well then," she said, "a very great deal, I fear. Would a hundred—"

He filled it in. "There," he said. "Surely you know," he added, gravely, "there is no complaint in these matters, or should not be. With an income like ours, you are *entitled* by right to your share, without coming to me in this way. And observe, don't suppose, for a moment, that I wish to know how you spend it. I have no right or title in the world. There, so recollect that. The bank is your bank as well as mine."

She hung her head. "O, if you knew, dear husband," she said, then stopped irresolutely.

His face lit up. "Ah," he said, "this is for some of your good noble charities. That secret angelic work of yours, which I know of old. To be sure; forgive me. But——"

She shook her head. "No, I cannot let you think that," she said; and she went away. She heard his deep sigh.

Presently she came back. "I had forgot; it is too late now. The banks are all closed, and this cheque can be of no use to-night."

"What," he said, a little bitterly, "is it so pressing as that?"

"I want it to-night," she said, desperately, "I do indeed. Forgive me for this, but——"

"Forgive you," he said—"forgive you, my dear! How strangely you talk, for wishing to have gold instead of a cheque. Nonsense; we can send out and have it cashed somewhere," and he rang the bell. But all the shops were closed.

Sitting below in his study, he did very little business that night. Towards nine he found his lamp growing dim, and rang the bell for his servant. The study door was opened by Martha. "Take this lamp away," he said, a little pettishly. "None of you mind your work. Look at the way it is burning. Stay, why didn't *he* come up?"

"The mistress," she answered, solemnly, "had sent him out of a message, and with a letter. She was most particular about it, as there was money——"

"I see," said he; then paused. Then very irresolutely, and with an affectation of displeasure, "And where has he gone at this time of night?"

He waited anxiously for the answer.

"To the captain's. The captain sent here twice this evening."

"Ah! I see," he said—not to Martha, but in reference to something that he said himself. "I see; perfectly."

What he saw was, that the captain never wanted money for himself, and would have died rather than have asked it, except from a man like General Cameron. Therefore the captain was useful as an agent.

Martha went on: "Indeed, we had company enough here to-day. A strange gentleman that sat near an hour."

"Mr. Grainger?" he said, eagerly.

"No, no," she said, "but a friend of his, and the captain was here with him. Very pretty goings on, while the master's at the bank."

"Martha!"

"Ah! she, the poor little soul that they put to rest in the heathen country, there was no trouble of *that* sort with her. Ah! if *she'd* been understood properly; but she wasn't, and it's too late now. There's Watson back. He's been away an hour."

"Send him to me."

Watson came, and took the lamp with all respect and many excuses. He'd have sent the groom, but the mistress was so particular.

And the captain had to write a letter, which he asked him to leave, and be very careful of, which he had done; "as I knew, sir, you wished the captain to be obliged in everything. Then the captain had written another letter for the mistress."

"You did quite right, Watson," said Mr. Tillotson. "Leave it here. She will be down herself."

It was not a letter, only a scrap of paper half twisted up. It was in his hand; and, indeed, it all but unfolded of itself. There was, besides, the legal fiction of husband and wife "being one," and the moral rule of their "having no secrets" from each other. There was no question of "breaking the seal" or "opening a letter."

It was a very short struggle. He rang the bell, and sent it up to her.

The note which the captain had written was to the following effect:

"My dear. It's all right. I told you I was the boy for the business. He has taken the hundred and fifty, and is off to the country. Yours, "T. D."

But the good captain had not mentioned that his own fifty "had gone to the back of that." "Ah, the creature, when I come to want it one of these days, I shall tell Tillotson; and it'll be time enough then."

Thus some two or three weeks more went by, and the cloud deepened all the while over that house. Mr. Tillotson's face began to draw back every day nearer and nearer to the old dreamy gloomy pattern, to the infinite concern of his friends. Meantime they went their usual round of life. A wistful look had come into *her* face, but they went out together to the festivities given in honour of so important a being as the head of the great bank. And in due course arrived a sort of Lord Mayor's card from Mrs. Bunnett, announcing that that City lady would be "At Home," with "Dancing," in a few days.

Mr. Tillotson said to his wife in his gentle voice, "We must go, of course. It will amuse you, and I hope you will make a fine show there, and that you have a splendid dress."

"You are too kind," she said, softly. "But I am well provided, too well." She stopped irresolutely, and came up to him. "I have done something wrong," she said, "and you are angry with me. But I did not mean it; indeed, no. We were so happy, but now——"

"You?" he said, sadly. "No. I have not complained, have I? No; you are everything that a good wife could be. I have no right to say a word."

"Ah! but you are changed. I see you are; and you have some reason which you will not tell; and yet I declare solemnly, as I stand here, that I know of nothing, unless, indeed, that unfortunate Ross——But if you only knew——"

The hard look came to his face again. "Have I made any complaint?" he said. "I repeat, you

are everything a husband could wish. Could you ask for a handsomer testimonial?" he added, trying to smile. "No; I am odd, strange, eccentric, given to humour—now in good spirits, now the reverse. *You* have an equable turn of temper, to be envied. That is a blessing; but it is my misfortune and fault."

She was going with a deep sigh, when he called her back softly. "Now," said he, "about this ball. You must be splendid. So to oblige me," he added, taking his cheque-book, "you must have this." And he began to "fill in" rapidly for two hundred; a "little bonus," he called it.

It was the day of the Bunnett ball, in the afternoon, when Mr. Tillotson was at the bank, and his wife had ordered her carriage expressly to visit Madame Adelaide, when she heard a step on the stair, and Mr. Tilney, an unfrequent visitor now, came in hurriedly.

"My dear child, here's a business," he said. "I saw the carriage at the door, but I knew you were in. I declare I don't know what we are coming to, or where the world is going to end!" And Mr. Tilney dropped into a chair, and looked round with a really worried and hopeless expression.

She asked him calmly, "What is it, dear father? I am prepared for anything."

"What is it?" repeated he; "what should it be? The old quarter, you may be sure! That fellow Ross, that disgrace to us all, who'll end on the gallows—mark my words! on the gallows tree, as sure—as sure as you spell my name with a T."

She turned a little pale. "And what has happened now?"

"What has he done?—disgraced us, ruined us all, pointed the finger of scorn as we go by. Only think, a gentleman, and a gentleman's son, dragged away by common bailiffs to a common sponging-house. No effects, no assets, nothing to meet the law, and then writes to me telling me to send him—let me see," added Mr. Tilney, taking a letter out of his pocket to be strictly accurate, "one hundred and ninety-eight pounds ten shillings (one-ninety-eight ten), to satisfy the detainer and costs."

"Poor, unfortunate, miserable Ross," said she, with sympathy; "always from one misfortune to another. What *is* to become of him?"

"You know, my dear, the idea of coming to me was ludicrous, simply ludicrous. I laughed again when I read—I, with all *my* claims. Not to be thought of. But the idea flashed on me at once like an injunction. You and Tillotson were obviously the quarter from which relief should come. And see," added Mr. Tilney, in a ruminative way, "see the delicacy of the fellow after all. He had a natural repugnance to trespass on his old flame, and as for Tillotson, I can quite understand his not thinking of him."

"But how can I help him?" she said, distractedly; "where can I get so much money? I cannot ask my husband; no, I cannot. He has given me money to-day already. Indeed, no."

Mr. Tilney smiled with great satisfaction. "See how things fall out. There you are, you see, like a miracle."

"But this was for a particular purpose," she said. "Dear father, you don't see the difficulty."

"Well, devote this money to him, and get more for the particular purpose. I know Tillotson. I'll answer for him. He is munificent in his ideas, absolutely. Just go to him and tell him the whole; or shall I?"

Long she thought it over. There was deep pity in her heart for this unhappy, most miserable being, whose days seemed doomed to misfortune, and for whose misfortunes she herself was not a little accountable. At last she came to a resolve; she thought it a duty to send what she had. Later, she could mention it to her husband—in a week, say. She sent away her two hundred pound cheque to the direction given her by Mr. Tilney.

Madame Adelaide had surpassed herself. As Mrs. Tillotson stood in her drawing-room, one of the most brilliant figures that could be conceived, her dress rich with tulle and laces, and lit up with the faint colouring of a delicate mauve ribbon. There were diamonds which nestled in the bouquets of tulle; and above, the gorgeous golden hair was reflected softly and richly in the glasses of the room. Mr. Tillotson looked at her with admiration, and said, with a sort of pride, "This is what I wished you to do;" then sighed deeply. "You have put that little sum to the best uses; you must come to me to-morrow again. You do not ask *half* enough."

Suddenly she clasped her hands. "O, then, if you would! I do not want it so much, but—"

His face grew cold and contracted. "We shall be late," he said, "and the carriage is waiting."

CHAPTER XVIII. THE BUNNETT BALL.

MRS. BUNNETT'S ball was "done in really first-class style," as one of her friends described it. The house was in a Bayswater square, built specially for Bunnett by a City architect, who had "turned out" many an insurance office and warehouse with the "true palatial effect"—that is, once conceding that great surfaces of plate-glass, and abundant carvings, and a series of architectural sentry-boxes, make up the ideal of palatial effect. The house was sumptuous, with gardens and a porch and a showy greenhouse full of the rarest plants, "brought special from Bulmer," as the friend, Nelgrove, took care to tell every one. The house was full of statues and pictures. On this night the house was illuminated from top to bottom, and the pretty sort of lantern which was on the top of the stairs was lit up in a "ravishing" manner. Everywhere along the stairs and passages were the exotics from Bulmer. Part of the garden had been taken in, covered over with an awning, lit with Chinese lanterns, and literally piled with plants and flowers "from Bulmer." As you came up-stairs or went down,

and met the City gentlemen with the City ladies on their arms, the conversation, flagging a little as it sometimes did, recovered animation by an allusion to the shrubs "got up from Bulmer." An alcove had been thrown out from the windows, all but masked by profuse shrubbery from Bulmer; and here, apparently as from a grove, came the strains of "Vöst's" band, the sad and winding valse, the brisk galop, and the more measured quadrille. It was remarkable about these melodies that they were all from the inspiration of "Vöst" himself, his musicians not being able to deal with other music.

Now came in Mr. and Mrs. Tillotson, the City exquisites, some of them of a rich Jewish tone in their faces, turning to study the brilliant lady who stood there. Excellent foils, indeed, were the stout, magnificent, but vulgar City dames who herded together. Mr. Bunnett came to meet them with a little pride; for they were a link between West and East Ends. The heavy yellow hair of Mrs. Tillotson glistened in the lights, and the little tinge of sadness in her face added to her beauty. But for such men as Mr. Bunnett, who were well meaning and good natured, she always had a sort of charity.

"You must show me your charming rooms," she said, kindly. "I hear everything is done with such wonderful taste."

Mrs. Bunnett, had she been by, would have preferred a compliment to the lavish magnificence of everything. As it was, Mr. Nelgrove was close behind.

"Poor Bulmer," he said. "Mrs. Tillotson, I suppose he hasn't left a twig in it. It's a howling wilderness at this moment, stripped right and left. I suppose to-morrow he could find a single geranium leaf—ch? You know it's true, Bunnett."

That gentleman smiled at this flattery. "There's enough left to get you a *booky*, Mrs. Tillotson."

The great Lackson was there, looking like an overgrown butler. He was principally in a corner all the night with some members of the board. "I go out to parties for business," he said, with a fair attempt at epigram, "and go to the office for pleasure." He had a "great thing coming out," and which he was hinting at all the night. It was seen by his face that he was hugging himself over this secret, and great exertions were made to extract it from him. He was implored, beseeched. A Jewish friend or two became almost pathetic. At last, in a corner, he consented to hint at a sort of outline. At Madrid, a scheme had been formed for a central railway station. Daring companies were to bring all the lines together in a focus, and "a concession" had been secured, but this was all "dark;" it would be understood. His society, the Universal Railway Roofing Company, were to have the job—a roof that would make all men gasp. Seven railways were to meet, the whole to be in the form of a star-fish or fan. So many thousand tons of iron to be employed. A government guarantee was in treaty; but that, on the whole, would

rather hamper them. The thing was, which company was to "bring it out." One, whose name he imparted under the back of his hand, were making stupendous offers; but then he felt that *he*—though not the Universal Railway Roofing Company—was bound more or less to the Foncier. However, they could talk of that again.

The night meanwhile was speeding on. Supper had set in, which was another field of display for magnificence. Nelgrove's voice was heard in the crowd that was battling to get to the table. "Those pheasants *all* came up from Bulmer this morning. D'y'e see that melon? it's not a pumpkin, I can assure you. *He* got that up from Bulmer, grapes, everything you see, all from Bulmer." But to the proprietor his tone was in the old disparaging style. "I suppose *he* was down at the markets himself yesterday, trying to pick up a bird or two—a bargain, you know. Look, Mrs. Henwicheer, look at those peaches. He knows a lord or two in the country, and he gets me to write to them when he gives a party, to beg a few peaches or so. He can't afford a hothouse at Bulmer *as yet*, you know. Ha! ha!"

Mrs. Henwicheer was delighted. "Go along," she said. "Why, he 'ave 'ot'ouses; you know you 'ave, Mr. Bunnett."

"O, nothing to speak of; very small. Now this I have got, a first-rate gardener, who came to me from Lord——"

"Get me some pheasant," said she, "like a good crectur. I want to taste the Bulmer birds. 'Enwicheer told me he never see such a lovely place as Bulmer. Never."

"We must get you down there, ma'am," said Mr. Bunnett, graciously. "We have a little wall-fruit and a few flowers. Bless me, there are the Tillotsons going."

They were, and were paying their adieux, Mr. Tillotson with some little exhilaration in his face. He had overheard some of the admiration excited by his beautiful wife. He had watched her figure as it moved through the room. He had seen the young officers asking to be introduced to her. He was a little proud, and as every fresh homage was paid to her, he had seen that brilliant face turned towards *him*, as if wishing that *he* should have his share in all.

As they were getting in the carriage, he said to her:

"I was indeed proud of you to-night. You looked divine."

As they entered the house, Martha came to him with "Mr. Ross has been here twice," news that brought a sort of chill to both their hearts. Before the hall door was closed, they heard hasty steps, and Ross came tramping up into the hall. He had been walking up and down the street, waiting for them to come in. It was about half-past one in the morning. He was wild-eyed as usual, and his face was flushed. "Now," said he, "Tillotson, I have met you at last, after a couple of hours' wait. Come

into the parlour. I must speak a word to the *happy pair* before they retire."

"I can't see you," said Mr. Tillotson, in a voice trembling. "You have no right to come into this house. I warned you already."

"Go, go," said she, imploringly. "Why do you come here in this way?"

"To see *him*," he said, pointing fiercely, "and to tell *him* that I want none of his compliments or his infernal patronising or pauper relief, and that I despise it, and that I won't *have* it. *That's* what I've come for."

She turned very pale now. Mr. Tillotson looked at him, then at her.

"I say," he went on, in a louder voice, "I shall *not* have it. How dare you attempt it? I know the game and the policy of it—to make me helpless by 'loading me with favours.' The good and the just man! But I won't *have* your clemency or help. I despise it. And I tell you, Tillotson, to your face, it's shabby, mean, contemptible, and despicable, to try and get such an advantage over me in my misfortunes."

"What does this mean?" said Mr. Tillotson, sadly, and turning to his wife. "What am I to do with this endless persecution?"

She said nothing, but stood there overcome, overpowered, and with her hands clasped and eyes cast on the ground.

"I fling it back," said Ross, stamping furiously. "One more week, and the courts shall have decided for me. Yes. I *know* it. I'll foil you in that way—you and your patronising of me, as if I were a common pauper that you were relieving. What a charitable lord to come and release me from a jail! I can tell you, I had loads of friends that would have done as much—and more! After all, it's not very much to lie under the weight of an obligation for a week, for a wretched two hundred pounds!"

Mr. Tillotson started. "Two hundred pounds!" he exclaimed. Then his eyes lit up. "Ah! what is this?" he said, turning to Mrs. Tillotson. "Could it be? So this is what you have done?"

In dreadful agitation she ran to him, almost sinking down before him. "O, forgive me," she said. "I meant to explain it, and I *can* explain it all. He was in misery, they told me—arrested—and I dare not ask you—"

He smiled bitterly. "*Dare* not ask me! It only wanted that! But why make any business of this?" he said, calmly, and turning to Ross. "You see now I am quite innocent in the matter. There is the benefactress and liberator you have to thank. I knew nothing of it."

Ross looked from one to the other with fierce eyes, then burst into one of his loud laughs. "This is flattering," he said. "My dear, sweet cousin is true to me, after all. So it was you, was it? O, this is getting rich. I am *very*

glad to hear it. With all your arts and tricks, Tillotson, you haven't turned her against me yet. No, nor never shall. And you know you made a mistake, and stepped in where you had neither law nor right to step in. And now it's coming against you. My dear child, God bless you for your humanity, and taking me out of jail, like St. Paul, and our poor Tillotson all in the dark the whole time!" And he pointed to him, and again laughed his harsh laugh.

But Mr. Tillotson did not hear or heed him. His eyes were upon that pale and shrinking figure, that seemed to sink more and more to the earth every instant.

"I may go now," said Ross. "This was well worth walking up and down the street for! It was indeed! It's a weight off my mind. 'Pon my soul, I couldn't have slept, thinking I owed *you* such an obligation. But with *her* it is different. Recollect, she was pledged to me from a child—*my* property, waiting *my* time and place—letters, my friend, letters that you never got or never saw, and then *you* come with your melancholy madness, and step in shabbily when I was far off. Serve you right! Serve you right! Reap as you sow, my friend. Good night!"

He was at last gone, and that scene ended. From that night (and the night of Mr. Bunnett's ball was long talked of in the City, and the presence there of "an uncommonly fine young woman whom Tillotson had just married, and with whom he was as happy as a king—'Gad, my boy, you or I would change places with him!')—from that we may conceive what a widening gulf there was between husband and wife. She had sunk down before him, and in those musical accents had protested to Heaven that it was for *his* sake that she had concealed that little matter, and for no other reason in the wide world. And this explanation he had accepted with the mournful acceptance that was habitual to him. He had lost confidence, and with confidence had lost everything. To that night (the night of Mr. Bunnett's ball, when everything came up from Bulmer) both husband and wife looked back with a shudder. Meanwhile, Ross's news was almost correct, and the great Appeal Case was to be presently decided, not in a week, as he had said, but in about three weeks' time.

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THE TALE OF AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE.

IN SIX WEEKLY PORTIONS. THIRD PORTION.

CHAPTER VI.

ONLY a short time intervened between that evening when Anna sang so wonderfully, and quitted the room so strangely, and the period fixed for Miss Wokenham's marriage. The approaching departure of our good friend naturally occupied our thoughts very much. It was a great event and excitement in the even tenor of our lives; and going to America was a much more serious matter in those days than it is now.

Miss Wokenham, however, was as brave and bright as possible; it was not until the very night before she went away, that she broke down, or lost the cheerful front we were familiar with.

"It isn't that I'm at all afraid, my dears," she sobbed out, "or that I have the least distrust of Lewis; but I am so fond of you all, and home is very dear, and everything is strange before me, and, of course, one must be a callous brute—and I hope I'm not *quite* that—to be able to take it all composedly, and—and I *can't* find my pocket-handkerchief!"

My heart warmed to Monsieur De Beauguet, when I saw him draw a bright-coloured bandana from his pocket, and gently wipe the little woman's streaming eyes, as if she had been a child. I could have hugged him when he afterwards applied the handkerchief to his own eyes with the utmost simplicity. Somehow I felt then, that our dear little governess was safe with him.

They had at first intended to be married in Liverpool, and to spend a few days there before leaving England. But the merchantman they were going out in, was to sail sooner than had been expected, and they would have no time to spare. So Miss Wokenham bade us good-bye in her maiden character that last evening, and was married early the following morning. Dear uncle gave the bride away. He and my aunt were the only guests present in the church, by Miss Wokenham's expressed desire.

She had some relatives—second cousins, I believe—who lived in a tall brick house just outside the town, and were very stiff and

stately. Not the less so, I dare say, that they had no particular reason for stiffness and stateliness. They were a childless old couple, sufficiently well-to-do in the world, and were mysteriously aggrieved by the fact of their relative's keeping a school. This injury, however, they kindly condoned, finding, possibly, some consolation in the reflection that her keeping a school relieved her friends from the necessity of keeping *her*. But the announcement of Miss Wokenham's intended marriage had shocked them—Mrs. Parker especially—to a frightful extent.

"You would have thought I had confessed to some awful crime, to hear cousin Sarah," said Miss Wokenham to my aunt. "She talked to me more like a jail chaplain than anything else. And after all, I should like to know what difference it can make to them? They insinuated that I must not expect *now*, to inherit any of their money—just as if I ever had expected it! and they talked vaguely of ruin and disgrace in store for the family. However, I kept my temper pretty well till they began to be impertinent about Lewis, when I fired up, and told them he was a Gentleman whose shoes none of the Parkers were worthy to wipe. Therefore, you see, it would have been of no use asking cousin Sarah and her husband to my wedding. And indeed they shouldn't have come if they had wanted to, unless they made a handsome apology to M'sieu'."

So our little schoolmistress became a wife, unilluminated by the lustre of the Parkers' presence or patronage. The breakfast was given at the Gable House, and, at the last moment, when it was time for the travellers to depart, Horace Lec came hurrying in, flushed and panting, with a great nosegay of hothouse flowers in his hand, which he presented to the bride. The poor little soul was in a sad state of agitation by this time, and was clinging to my aunt as if she could never part from her, but she smiled through her tears when she saw Horace. He was always a great favourite of hers. "My goodness!" said she, with a spark of her wonted vivacity, "where did you get those glorious flowers? But your face is as bright as they are. I scarcely hoped to see you again. I thought you were at your father's for the week."

"Did you suppose I would let you leave Will-borough without saying good-bye?" returned Horace. "I was up at six o'clock this morn-

ing, ransacking the greenhouses at the Hall. When I told the head gardener that I wanted some flowers to give to a bride, he took quite an interest in their selection, and said I was to gather what I chose. I galloped the new mare nearly all the way into Willborough. And now you must pay me for my posy, Madame de Beauguet."

To see the start the little woman gave when he called her by her new name! But she put her hands in his, and stood on tiptoe to be kissed, saying, "God bless you, my dear boy. I shall always like you, and keep you in my thoughts side by side with our beloved friends at the Gable House. You know, I cannot express a higher regard than that, for any one."

More kisses and embraces, confused farewells, promises to write, thanks, tears, blessings, and our dear old friend was gone. The last glimpse I had of her, showed me her small form being lifted into the fly, by my uncle's strong arms. Good true friend! As large of heart as she was tiny of stature. What a giantess would Miss Wokenham have been, if her soul and body had borne proportion to one another!

For some days after the marriage, the whole household seemed unsettled; and Anna and I wandered about from the house to the gardens, and from the gardens to the orchard, and about and about, in a most desultory manner.

Old Stock had been forced so far to yield to age and rheumatism, as to accept the assistance of a permanent under-gardener, who was to receive his directions, and spare him the hardest part of the out-door work. It was a sore trial to him, until he discovered a mine of comfort in the alleged and assumed total incapacity of his assistant. This inexhaustible theme for grumbling seemed to afford him more enjoyment than anything except his pipe. "Good morning, Stock," said I to him, a few days after Miss Wokenham's wedding. "What sort of a spring are we likely to have? And how are things looking with you here?" He was standing in the kitchen garden—leaning on a great brown knotted stick, scarcely browner or more knotted than his hands—inspecting the labours of his subordinate, who was digging up a great potato-bed. It was one of Stock's rheumatic mornings, and he was unable to handle a spade himself.

"Spring, Miss Margrit," growled the old man. "The spring'll be all right, to be sure. The Lord'll look after that. But as to how things is looking here, why howiver is things *like* to look, when the master 'livers 'em over to the marcy of Bill Green? In course I knows *my* dooty:" Stock was always comfortably satisfied on that point: "my dooty" wrote out plain. It may be hard on a man as has sarked the master forty year, fur to see the soil turned up in that there fashion, like stirring furnety wi' a ladle; but if the master ordains as Bill Green is to spoon the herth instead of spading it, why spooned the herth must be."

"Don't be hard on Green, Stock," said I; "he'll improve, no doubt, with all the pains you will take to teach him."

"Pains! Ah, great pains an' little gains. Jist look at him now, Miss Margrit, a-standin' gapin' like a stuck pig, instead of armin' his day's wage. Didn't ye niver see a young lady afore, ye great gaby?"

"I've see'd lots on 'em," returned Bill Green: a blue-eyed stolid young fellow, upon whom Stock's sarcasm and scolding appeared equally powerless to produce any impression.

"O, ye have, have ye? Then what are you standin' starin' at? Why don't ye try to do summat for your daily bread, thof it *be* but spoonin'?"

"I've digged this here bed, an' I dunno what's to do next," said Green.

Stock turned to me triumphantly.

"Ye see, ye see, Miss Margrit! That's the way! He ain't got no more notion of his dooties nor a babby. It's a marcfiful Providence as I'm able to git about to look after him. Come here along wi' me, Bill Green, and I'll pint out what mischief you and your spoon is to do next. Bring your spoon along with you. Not as the Lord wills that the article should ever be missing where *you* are!" And the old man hobbled away to another part of his domains, followed by Bill Green, who confidentially bestowed a broad grin on me as he departed.

Horace greatly relished Stock's eccentricities, and I got into the habit of treasuring up his odd sayings and doings, in order to repeat them to Horace. Horace was really witty. I have never known a more amusing companion than he could be when once he knew you well enough to cast off his shyness. He sometimes had fits of wild spirits that kept Uncle Gough in roars of laughter. But then, too, he was very easily moved to sympathy with anything sad. The tears would spring to his eyes in a moment at hearing a plaintive tune or a pathetic story. He rarely could refuse to give to a beggar, and was as tender as a woman with aged people and little children. Uncle Gough used to say that Horace had one great fault; he could not say, No. "Wants ballast a bit, does the laddie," said uncle. "But, Lord help us: We all grow hard soon enough; and an old heart in a young bosom is worse than an old head upon young shoulders."

CHAPTER VII.

GRADUALLY I grew to join the thought of Horace with every incident in my life. When the lilies of the valley first peeped up under the shady side of the moss-grown orchard wall, I said to myself: "How Horace will like to see them!"—for he loved flowers dearly. When old Bran, the watch-dog, crawled feebly into the parlour, one day for the first and last time in his life, and died with his faithful head on my uncle's feet, I thought, amidst my tears: "Horace will grieve for Bran." If I wore a brighter ribbon than usual, or any new piece of girlish finery, I secretly wondered, "How will Horace like it?" I suppose this was "falling in love," but I did not know it. It was rather growing into love, gradually

and gently, as the love of kindred—father, mother, brothers, sisters—grows up in our hearts, until it becomes a part of our nature, and we can no more remember when it was not there, than we can recal the days of our earliest infancy. Mine was not a passionate nature, but it was a clinging one. Love, with me, was not the fierce devouring overmastering feeling that I have seen it in others. It grew to be a part of me: an ever-present, steady, strong affection, that claimed no passionate expression nor violent outbursts, but that lived in my life, and breathed in my breath, and took root in my innermost and deepest heart of hearts. Yes, it was love that I felt for Horace Lee; real, true, undying love. Undying, for O a long life lies between those youthful days and this present time in which I write, and O, my Lucy, for whom I write, I love him to this hour!

Although I can now, on looking back, clearly understand what were my own feelings, you must not suppose that I did so at nineteen. I never thought of "questioning my heart," or "analysing my inner consciousness," or of attempting any of the profound metaphysical problems which—the circulating library informs us—the girls of this generation are accustomed to solve. Inasmuch, that sometimes I feel almost afraid lest they should "analyse" all their emotions away, or lose the sweet evanescent freshness of them, and leave only a little earthy deposit at the bottom of the crucible. But when I look around me, and see eyes as bright, and cheeks as blooming, as those other eyes and cheeks I saw so long ago, I believe that fresh unsophisticated hearts come, according to the goodness of God, to gladden the earth as naturally as the daisies; and I revert to my old comforting conviction, that when youth and love quite go out of the world, the world itself must go out too.

I look back on that girl at the Gable House as on another creature. I smile at her follies and simplicities, and weep at her sorrows, and grieve over the bitter days that lie before her. Ah, how young she seems, with her nineteen years, and how old am I, Aunt Margaret!

Well! As I have said, Horace Lee became the central figure in my life, his presence made me quietly glad, and I loved my dear guardians and benefactors the better that they also loved him. But it was all unconsciously, or at least without thought, on my part. Horace was like a son of the house, and uncle used to call him and Anna his two spoiled bairns. Anna had given way to no outbreaks of temper since that stormy night of her wilfulness about the singing, and we hoped that, as she grew older, she was gaining self-control and gentleness. My thoughts often recurred to what Miss Wokenham had said to me on that same evening, and I wondered what "breakers ahead" she could have foreseen, or fancied she foresaw. I came at last to the conclusion that she dreaded trouble for us all from Anna's violent temper, knowing, as she well did, how unchecked by firm opposition that fiery spirit had been from babyhood. I wished that

our good friend could have seen how pleasant a change had come over my sister within the last two months. I mentally resolved to give her a glowing account of Anna's improvement when I should write to Canada, so as to convey to her that I understood what she had meant by her warning, and to assure her that her anxiety had been overstrained and needless. Altogether, that winter evening was frequently in my mind, for, from it, I dated the loss of my little hair chain. Search was made for it on the following morning, but vainly; and then the preparations for our old schoolmistress's wedding had sufficiently occupied us all, from the kitchen-maid up to dear Aunt Gough.

Old Mr. Lee came occasionally to see us, and to express to my aunt and uncle his sense of their kindness and hospitality towards his son.

"Horace is doing well at Rotherwood's," said the old gentleman. "At least, so they tell me. Sir Robert"—this was the great baronet, Mr. Lee's employer—"Sir Robert sent for Horace to the Hall the other day, to speak about a little matter of business, the draining of Meadow Leas, and Sir Robert had him into the drawing-room—into the drawing-room where my lady was sitting—and made him stop to luncheon."

We were all uncomfortably dumb in a moment, and I felt, without looking at him, that Horace was crimson. But Mr. Lee went on in his usual self-satisfied way, in happy ignorance of the misery we were feeling.

"He stayed in the drawing-room, where my lady was, full twenty minutes—from that to half an hour, wasn't it, Horace?—and Sir Robert shook hands with him when he came away. Very gratifying. But they always have been pleased to entertain a great respect (however unmerited) for me."

Somehow or other, the fonder I grew of Horace, the more I shrank from Mr. Lee. I must have appeared a mere fool in his eyes, for a perfect pall of silence and shyness seemed to envelop me from head to foot when I was in his presence. Anna, on the contrary, who always was less diffident than I,—and with good reason, for she was a bright winning creature, with the lively frank manner that had never known a chill or a rebuff,—Anna would laugh and chat and play off her pretty airs on the old gentleman with astonishing vivacity. He admired her vastly, and called her all manner of "sylphs," and "nymphs," and "cruel charmers," and "fair enslavers:" compliments over which Anna used to go into fits of laughter in private. But she seemed determined to fascinate Mr. Lee, and she certainly succeeded.

One day, when the spring was pretty far advanced, and the young leaves and the tender grass had put forth their first fresh delicious green, Mr. Lee appeared at the Gable House early in the forenoon. He had his chaise at the door, he said, and was come to ask my aunt to do him the honour of taking a drive. She had been ailing somewhat during the last week, and he thought that the bright sun and fresh air would do her good.

"Do go, dear aunty," said we; and my uncle joined us in urging her.

"I will take you to a farm of one of Sir Robert's tenants, where I have business," said Mr. Lee, "and the good people of the house will be proud to offer you some homely refreshment, as a friend of *mine*. I am to sleep in Willborough to-night, and will drive you back before it grows dusk. There is—ahem!—there is a third seat behind, and if one of the young ladies would accompany us——"

It was comical to see the look he gave me. It said "don't *you* come," so plainly. I involuntarily answered the look, by exclaiming, "O no, of course Anna will go." But Anna wished me to have the pleasure of the drive, and protested she would not care to go and leave me at home. "That is nonsense, dear," said I. "Do you go, and take care of aunty, and make her wrap up. Perhaps Mr. Lee will take me some other day." A proposal to which Mr. Lee, in his gladness at escaping my companionship for the present, politely and even cordially assented. So it was settled that Anna should go; and I helped to put warm wraps into the little open chaise, in case the spring evening should turn chilly as they came home; and I stood watching them as they drove away: Anna's dark ringlets waving about her pretty face, and her mouth pursed up into a ridiculous grimace in imitation of the unconscious Mr. Lee who sat square and stately before her.

There was never lack of occupation at the Gable House. Aunt Gough had made us familiar with all housewifely lore, and both my sister and I were proud of our skill as housekeepers. My morning, therefore, passed busily away. After giving my uncle his early dinner, and seeing him established with his pipe and the London newspaper in the dining-room, I took my knitting and went into the garden to enjoy the brightness of the sunny afternoon. I wandered all over the grounds, through the shrubbery, into the orchard where the happy little birds were chirping and twittering in the gnarled old fruit-trees. I marked the early flowers dotting the borders with brilliant spots of colour; and I peered with keen interest at the promise of a great plenty of roses, displayed by the standard trees upon the lawn. It was all so dear and so familiar to me! I knew every nook in the place, every time-tinted patch in the old brick walls, every shrub, every bough, nay almost every leaf. As I came slowly back towards the house, I stopped to pick a bunch of broad-faced daisies that grew luxuriantly on a tiny green mound in a sunny corner of the shrubbery. It was a very tiny mound, with a white upright stone at one end of it, whereon the syllable VIC was engraven. Poor little Vixen lay beneath it, her fiery barkings and quaint gambols stilled for ever. "Vic," said I, half aloud, "I am glad to know that you were a very happy little dog." And then I began to think of our childish days when Anna and Vic were such fast friends and joyous playmates. I remembered the great battle of the porch, and

Stock's signal defeat, and then I thought of my discomfiture and poor Dolly's deadly peril. Coming to the said porch at that moment, I went inside it and sat down. Though it was yet early in the year, the afternoon sun falling on that side of the house, and beating on the yellow space of gravel—still the pride of Stock's heart—made the shade pleasant. The click of my knitting-needles grew slower and slower, and at length ceased. I had fallen into a drowsy kind of reverie. I was given to day-dreams then. All sorts of pictures of my childhood's days, and of people and places I knew, came into my head and passed away to be succeeded by other pictures. I was conscious of a lazy kind of curiosity as to what I should see next, when I heard a step on the gravel path. It was not old Stock's heavy tread this time, but a light rapid footfall.—I well knew whose.

"I thought I should find you here," said Horace, coming out of the sunlight to my side.

"Did you? I have not been in the porch before, this year; but this lovely afternoon tempted me. Aunty and Anna are gone to drive with your father."

"Yes, I know it. I am glad Mrs. Gough consented to go. I believe the air will do her good."

He had come eagerly into the porch, as though he had been seeking me, wishing to say something; but now he sat silent, trifling with the ball of knitting-worsted, that had lain on my lap. I have mentioned that he had an absent trick of turning and twisting things in his fingers.

"What you are doing now, reminds me," I told him, "of my hair chain. Do you know, I have never been able to find it, since that night when you made Anna nervous by playing with it? Isn't it strange?"

He put his hand into his breast, and turned his eyes upon me with a look that made my colour rise and my heart beat faster.

"Margaret"—O the tenderness in his voice! how sweet my name sounded!—"Margaret, shall I tell you something? Here is your chain. I have had it next my heart ever since that night." He drew it forth, and held it out to me. A great joy began to flood my soul, but it was my nature to distrust such happiness. I could not accept it all at once; it seemed too great to believe in. So I tremblingly held out my hand for the chain, with a slight exclamation of surprise.

"No," said Horace, drawing nearer to me, "not till you have heard why I took it. You have not asked me that, Margaret. Do you know?"

I shook my head. I was past speaking.

"Can you guess?"

My tears began to blind me, and I could not keep down a sob. He threw his arms around me, and held me to his breast.

"Because it had been yours; because it had clasped your throat; because the poorest ribbon you could wear, the glove that had touched your hand, the flower you had gathered and

thrown away, would be dear and precious to me; because I love you, Margaret!"

O those words, those dear, dear words! O that happy time, that happy, happy time!

"Horace," I whispered, after a while, "Prince Goldenheart is come at last." For he knew the story of my childish play, and had often laughed over it with me.

"Is it Prince Goldenheart?" he said. "Well; he should have a heart of gold who woos my Margaret. Thank God, at all events, there is no wicked fairy to blight my gentle Princess, or to stand between her and her love."

As he spoke, a shadow blotted out the evening light; and when it had passed, the sun had set.

"What was that?" I asked, looking up.

"Why, they have come home! Is it so late? It was your sister Anna."

"They have come home? Then they must have driven round into the stable-yard, and come into the house by the back way. I dare say Anna was looking for me. I must go now, Horace. Please let me."

I felt much as the child of twelve years before had felt, when old Stock, personifying the work-a-day world of reality, broke in upon her fairy story. We had been dreaming such a beautiful dream, Horace and I, all to ourselves, that for the moment it seemed a hardship to come out of that enchanted realm, and face the common aspect of accustomed things. "Just one instant, Margaret!" He held both my hands clasped in one of his, and stood with his other hand laid softly on my head, looking down upon me.

"Aunt will wonder what has become of me."

"Answer me this one question. Do you really, really, love me?"

"O Horace! have I not said so?"

"Say it again! Once more—only once more."

"May I go if I say it again? Do you promise?"

"I promise, darling."

I released myself from his hold, and drew down the hand that rested on my head; then, leaning my two hands upon his shoulders, I raised my face to his, and kissed him; darting away next moment at full speed, and never stopping until I had flown across the hall, and along the stone flagged passage that led to the morning-room. I paused outside the door, suddenly conscious of flushed cheeks and dishevelled hair, and panting from my swift run. I heard voices laughing and talking within, and, reassured by the conviction that they were not thinking of me, I stole up to my own chamber to bathe my face and smoothe my hair. When I came down again, and entered the morning-room, the tea-table was spread there, and Horace was seated beside my aunt, who was leaning back in her large arm-chair with an air of weariness. Anna was there, and my uncle was there, and Mr. Lee.

"Dear aunt, are you tired? Have you had a pleasant day?" said I, hastening to her.

"Where have you been, Madge, my love? Anna was looking for you. Will you make the

tea, and offer Mr. Lee some cold meat? I had a very agreeable drive, but I am a thought tired now, my dear."

So, the business of the tea-table came opportunely to cover my confusion. After I had attended to our guest, I took courage to glance at Horace. He had been waiting on my aunt, holding her teacup, drawing forward a folding screen to shield her from the scorching blaze of the wood fire—my uncle never relinquished evening fires until quite midsummer—and placing a broad cushion beneath her feet. Now he sat beside her, with his handsome head bent down to listen to her soft slow speech. How I loved him! How beautiful the gentle deference of his youth and strength to her weakness and age, appeared in my eyes! Anna was chatting gaily with Uncle Gough and Mr. Lee; but she kept looking across at my aunt and Horace, as if she too thought the picture they presented a pleasant one.

"We have been to such a dear old farm-house, Madge," said Anna. "Such a quaint, queer, uncomfortable, picturesque old place! Meadow Leas it is called. The drive there is pretty too. I did so enjoy it."

"The good farmer and his dame were truly proud and delighted to entertain Mrs. Gough and your sister," said Mr. Lee. "Hospitable kind souls, poor things!"

"Hospitable! Yes, indeed, Madge. I never saw such heaps of food as they spread on the table. Pies, and cheese, and cream, and ham, and butter, and ale, and bread. I was frightened when I saw the piled up platter of rabbit pasty they put before me. And they expected me to eat it all!"

"You must go some day, Margaret dear," said my aunt. "I'm sure you would enjoy it. Farmer Gibson and his wife have all manner of pets that you would delight in."

Old Mr. Lee was to sleep at the Blue Bell, where he always put up when he came to Willborough; and he withdrew early.

"I have business to attend to to-morrow, that will cause me to be up betimes, my good madam," he said to aunt in his tiresome way. "You will therefore excuse me if I take my leave now. Late hours do not suit me. They interfere with that clearness of brain which is essential to the transaction of important business."

I was very glad to see him rise to depart, for late hours did not agree with Aunt Gough any more than they did with him, and she had been looking very weary for some time past. "Horace," Mr. Lee continued, "I shall see you in the morning. Our ways lie in different directions to-night. I shall have a message to deliver to you from Sir Robert. Good night, my dear madam. Nay, nay," in reply to some murmured thanks from my aunt, "only too glad to have afforded you a day's pleasure. Farewell, Miss Anna. I am sure you will not soon be forgotten at Meadow Leas. A vision of youth and beauty bursting on the—he! What is the word? No matter, you understand me. Good night, Mrs. Gough. And good night to you, Miss

Sedley." He had very nearly omitted his parting salutation to me altogether; but I could not let Horace's father go without a farewell, that night, of all nights; so I had emerged from my nook behind the tea-table. Mr. Lee tried to look as if he had been purposely reserving the pleasure of shaking hands with me for the last, and had meant to come round to my side of the room if I would but have awaited him patiently. But I am afraid I must make the humiliating confession, that I believe he had quite forgotten I was present.

My aunt rose as soon as Mr. Lee had departed, and said she would go to bed. She seemed very feeble when she got upon her feet, and I began to fear that the day's exertion had been too much for her. Horace gave her his arm to the room door, and then I think my uncle observed her weakness with some anxiety. "Shall I carry you up-stairs, my dear?" he said. "It wouldn't be for the first time."

"No, love, no; I'm not so dead tired as that. Madge will come with me. Good night, all. I shall be strong again to-morrow after a night's rest." So I went up the wide old-fashioned staircase with my aunt, she leaning on my arm; and we made the journey slowly, though the ascent was far from being a steep one.

Anna had seemed inclined to linger a little; but Horace was preoccupied, and did not talk; and my uncle's dear face had a rather troubled look as his eyes followed his wife's slow steps out of the room. Anna, to whom silence and dullness were always intolerable, forthwith began to yawn, and followed us up-stairs almost immediately. Horace remained in the morning-room, and I saw in his eyes, and I felt in the parting pressure of his hand, that he would speak in the fulness of his heart to my uncle, before he went away that night. The thought made me a little nervous and agitated, though Heaven knows I had never had cause to dread my dear guardian and benefactor. I longed to speak to Aunt Gough, and tell her of my great happiness, and receive the sweet motherly sympathy that she had ever been ready to lavish on me from my childish days; but she seemed so fatigued and unstrung that I dared not venture to excite her that night for my selfish pleasure. I remained with her until her eyes were closed and her head lay placidly on the pillow; then, lamp in hand, I crossed the broad landing to my bed-chamber.

Anna and I shared a large, low, oak-panelled room with three deep windows looking on to the lawn. Our white-curtained beds stood side by side on an island of crimson carpet relieved against the darkness of the polished floor. I found that my sister was already in bed, and apparently asleep; shading the lamp with my hand, I walked softly to the dressing-table, and looked in the glass. It was a large old-fashioned oval mirror, set in a black carved swing frame. How plainly it all comes back to me! I can see the blue gleam of moonlight that slanted in at the many-paned

windows, and threw a fantastic pattern on the oaken boards; I can see the wide stretch of garden and shrubbery, shimmering ghost-like out of a silver veil of mist; I can see the long shadows of the trees rocking and swaying noiselessly on the lawn, as the trees themselves moved with a soft whispering sound in the night breeze; I can smell the fragrance of a bunch of rich brown wallflowers that stood in a china vase on the window-sill. It all fixed itself in my mind during the moment in which I set my lamp upon the dressing-table, and tilted down the glass to an angle at which I could see my face reflected in it. Not a touch or tint in that picture has faded in fifty years. "This, then, is the happy girl whom Horace loves!" said I to myself, looking at the face which looked at me out of the dark sea-green depths of the mirror. I knew very well that it was not a beautiful face. I knew very well that it was scarcely even pretty. But it was irradiated now, with a light that transfigured it. "O I am so glad!" I whispered through my blissful tears. "I almost believe that being so dearly loved, and loving so dearly, will make me grow pretty." Then I bent forward and put my lips to the cold surface of the glass, and said, "That means good night for Horace!"

I turned away from the glass with a heart full of happy thoughts, and yet my tears fell fast. Anna was lying asleep on her white bed, and, as I looked at her lovely fresh face in its nest of rippling hair, I yearned to tell my joy to anything so sweet and young and beautiful, to receive her sisterly kiss, and to feel the clasp of her arms around my neck, as I had felt it many a time when she had come to me to be soothed in some baby sorrow, and we had fallen asleep together. I thought I could tell her better, if I put out the light; therefore, when I was undressed I extinguished the lamp and kneeled down by her bedside. The moonlight shone into the chamber, and her hand and arm, tossed carelessly outside the coverlet, were bathed in a flood of pale brightness; but her face was in shadow.

"Anna," I said in a low voice, putting my cheek down on hers, "Anna, I have something to tell you."

She did not answer me.

"Anna, darling! It is something that makes me very, very happy, and I cannot sleep without telling you."

She breathed quicker, and the white hand that lay in the moonlight clenched itself.

"Don't be frightened, dear. It is good, good news I have to tell you."

No reply. The cheek on which mine rested turned a little away, but she did not speak.

"Anna, Horace Lee loves me. He has told me so!"

She dashed herself out of my arms, turning so as to bury her face in the pillow, and the moonlit hand went up into the black shadow around her head, and stayed there.

"Why did you wake me, Margaret? I was asleep. I was dreaming. I was so happy,

and now you have awakened me, and I shall never, never dream that dream again."

"Anna, my pet, my child, I did not know you were sleeping so soundly. I did not mean to disturb you. Don't cry, my dear, don't cry!" For she was sobbing and moaning fretfully.

"Don't speak to me, Margaret. Get to rest. Say what you have to say, to-morrow. I—I can't understand you now. I am tired, and you have awakened me, and I was dreaming pleasantly, and now my dream is gone!"

She pushed me irritably from her. My heart felt very heavy. It was such a sudden chill after my glow of joy and tenderness! But with the habitual yielding to her, which was common to us all, I rose up from my knees and went to my own bed. "I ought not to have roused her," I said to myself as I lay down. "She was tired and sleepy, and she is such a child!" Once, I stretched out my hand to touch her, and as she remained perfectly still, I hoped she was sleeping. Gradually I grew drowsy, and my eyes closed, and my ears lost their vigilance, and the sweetness of Horace's smile, as he had held me in his arms that day, with the dancing shadows of the leaves upon his head, faded and faded, and melted away. But all night long, at intervals, I had an uneasy sense of disquietude and restlessness, and a fancy that some one was moving about the room. Once I dreamed that Anna was pacing up and down, her bare feet pattering lightly but distinctly on the polished floor. But when I started, and sat up and looked around, everything was still, and I could hear no footstep, and the moon had set, and it was very dark.

SOLDIERS' LAW.

THAT the present state of Soldiers' Law is old fashioned, unsatisfactory, and perhaps "unbecoming officers and gentlemen," is pretty evident to those who have followed the trailing course of military trials during the last few years. After surmounting inconceivable obstructions, and contending against brute inert opposition on the part of ancient generals at the Horse Guards, the clumsy Brown Bess, the strangling stock, and the absurd shako, were happily got rid of. It was not until yesterday that old martinets could be brought to believe, or could be forced to sanction the belief—for they themselves do not believe yet—that a hairy lip and beard are consistent with order and discipline. The soldier has now his thighs kept warm, his throat kept free, his head left unaching, and his shoulders ungalled; but the system of law which regulates his life is as old fashioned, and cumbersome, and inconvenient, as the old condemned shako and ancient musket. Let us look for a moment at the bad and good side of this system.

First, what is the source of martial authority? Every constable who arrests a man in the street, every judge and magistrate who commit to prison, are *prima facie* guilty of assaults, and are liable to actions at law. But their justifi-

cation is their authority, delegated to them from the fountain of honour. What title, then, have a number of officers and gentlemen (we should never forget the supposed convertible character of those terms) to seize on one of their fellow-subjects, try him, commit him to jail, or shoot him? Their authority is under an act of parliament, and, curious enough, expires at the end of a year; but, in every April, what is called the Mutiny Act is brought in and passed; and under the Mutiny Act, and under the orders and by-laws which that act gives authority to frame, the whole of our army is governed and kept together. Without that act, every officer would be liable to action for assault, for damages, for false imprisonment, and perhaps for libel and slander; and it has been speculated if, by any mischance, the act were delayed or passed by, what would be the beginning or end of the confusion! This arrangement will seem strange to those who look at foreign countries, where a man enlisting in the army, or being forced into the army, becomes, as of course, subject to all its regulations, no matter how those regulations came into being. But it illustrates the excellent logic of our law; for the common law is the great guide of the country, and by no wresting of the common law could punishment for disobedience to an officer's order be twisted into an offence. Such punishment had to be made legal, and the only way of legalising it was by statute.

There are several kinds of courts-martial—the General, the Detachment-General, the District, the Drumhead, and the Regimental. There are also some minor varieties, which are unimportant. The Drumhead is seldom heard of, and is nearly out of fashion. The General court-martial, the most important of all, which deals with the highest officers and highest offences, must consist of thirteen members of all ranks, though no field-officer can be tried by any one under the rank of a captain. The Detachment-General is an exceptional tribunal, and is usually held to deal with plunderers and marauders. It consists of three officers. The District court consists of seven officers, who may *not* award the punishment of death. Offences from all regiments in the district may be brought before them. The Regimental court-martial is a purely domestic tribunal, as may be gathered from its name, and must consist of five officers. Besides these regularly constituted courts, some superior officer sits every day as a magistrate, to deal with night charges and little irregularities. There are also Courts of Inquiry, which seem to have no legal force, and do not go beyond what their name imports. Officers and witnesses are only *invited* to present themselves before it, but there is a moral force in the verdict of such a court which no officer could resist. So far, this organisation seems reasonable and even nicely logical.

The regular procedure of a court-martial is now very familiar, from the many recent scandals at which the public have had to look on. The mem-

bers of the court are said to be both judges and jurors; but, in truth, are really jurors, with a president for judge. There is a military prosecutor, a military judge-advocate, or deputy judge-advocate, who is like the civil attorney-general, and should keep the court "straight" as to matters of their law; but behind the scenes is the real puller of the wires, the judge-advocate-general, under whose directions the charges are framed, and who "advises proofs"—to use a legal phrase. It is affirmed again and again in all the military books, that no civil assistance can be recognised by the courts in any of their proceedings. Lawyers who are "brought in" are told again and again indirectly, and almost contemptuously, that the court can have neither ears nor eyes for them; and yet, with an absurd inconsistency, the centre of the whole rests on civil guidance, takes its very inspiration from the profession so tabooed, and an eminent barrister and member of parliament watches over the proceedings, and takes care that all is legal and regular. But the eminent barrister and member of parliament is not present during the court, and is represented by deputy; and here, again, the system shows a great and glaring defect. These officials can have but little experience, and pretend to have no training. A really important trial, always embarrassed by questions and "points" as serious as those in a criminal court, occurs very rarely; meaner cases present no "points," and are of no practical use as training. A great case suddenly arises. An officer is suddenly thrust upon the complex duties of examining, objecting to the reception of evidence, speaking—all new to him—and the principles of which duties are not to be picked up from books. The result must be an exhibition of hopeless floundering, unless, as in the instance of some recent "Fenian" courts-martial at Dublin, in the case of an officer of more than customary efficiency and intelligence.

But it is usual to allow the prisoner the assistance of "counsel": a favour that is, in truth, no favour, as it would be a hardship to refuse to any one in his situation the right of conferring or whispering with a friend; and as the court cannot tolerate the presence of a wig and gown, and has not instinct enough to appreciate any other more secret "note" of the barristerial character, this "friend" cannot be assumed to belong to that proscribed order. But the result of the introduction of this element makes an important difference. Besides the actual value of their assistance, counsel are not inclined to leave behind them the common shifts and tricks of their profession, and the result is a hopeless muddle, and more hopeless mystification of the whole case; these legal cuttle-fishes, if they can do no more, striving to get their clients away in a black cloud. In great cases, therefore, the authorities, not wishing to be taken at a disadvantage, bring in *their* counsel; the deputy-judge-advocate has his, and the prosecutor his; and the whole battle is then fought in ambush.

There is clearly something false in all this, and sometimes the falsity is brought to a crucial test in a rather amusing way, as in the Fenian trial just alluded to; when one of the court unguardedly said that "the counsel" had suggested an improper question to the prisoner; counsel were not slow to avail themselves of this recognition, seized on the vantage ground thus offered, vociferated at the president, demanded and obtained apologies, and were not only seen and heard by the court that *could* not see or hear them, but made their presence felt in a very inconvenient way. The drollest part of the whole is, that a counsel thus employed is known to Soldiers' Law as "*amicus curiæ*!" A ludicrous misnomer, as all the world knows: an *amicus curiæ* being an adviser of the court, and not of the prisoner.

There is some reform wanted here, and in an age which is striving to shake itself free of "shams," this "blind" should be got rid of speedily. The question is, how? There could be found a very simple remedy. It must be conceded that lawyers have no business in such tribunals. They are in a false and even undignified position, and before a tribunal which in most instances can hardly apprehend the value of the "points" they make. There should be separate provinces. Law should keep to law, and soldiering to soldiering. There is a "staff college" now in existence which is supposed to be the fountain of training and intellect for the British army. This college has its professors and schools, and furnishes science to officers. It would be easy, surely, to have a recognised department for military law—say a professor—and a course and examination. Any one who passed with distinction should be considered as a sort of military barrister, and kept ready "on the staff," like other officers of attainments who have passed through corresponding courses. This would be matter of detail; but it would be a basis and groundwork for reform. The next step would be more important. From this class should the president, judge-advocates, and prosecutors, be selected; and it would be advisable to have these officers always in readiness, so that on any court-martial taking place in the United Kingdom, an experienced and trained staff of officials should be sent over from the college; just as the Crown in important cases sends "down" the attorney or solicitor general, or some important official. In this way, from long practice, the "business" would soon be learnt. So, too, in the prisoner's case; he should not be prevented from having any assistance he may choose to have: but the court might be allowed to assign him an experienced military barrister.

Thus would grow up a settled *system*, which is sadly wanted. The professed system of any military investigation is "to hear the whole truth," everything that can be said, and everything that any one has to say. Talk with any officer on the matter, and he will take a pride in insisting on this view: "We do not care for *law*; justice is our

end." Never was there a more transparent, or, it may be said, a more ignorant fallacy.

If there be one thing that redeems the many short-comings of British law, it is the excellent golden and most precious rule of *excluding* everything irrelevant, and narrowing the point at issue as much as possible. Centuries of experience have discovered that the sure way of hiding truth under a bushel is to let in details of every kind and degree, but, with a fatuity which is the result of complacent ignorance and inexperience, our military legislators have chosen to adopt precisely the opposite course. The Robertson court-martial, however much it was to be deplored in one sense, illustrated this in the most delightful way, and was the *reductio ad absurdum* of the system. In that trial there were properly but one or two questions to be tried; before the trial was over there were some fifty or sixty questions before the court. A good illustration of the embarrassment to which this "letting in all the truth" led to, was this, or nearly this: An officer, who was giving evidence against the prisoner, referred incidentally to some transaction that took place in an English town long before, as an illustration of the prisoner's misconduct; the prisoner denied the truth of this insinuation, and called witnesses to prove his denial. The officer whose credit was thus impeached brought *his* witnesses. This actually led to the credibility of *these* witnesses, and thus at the end of many profitless days the court found itself lost in a jungle of statements and counter-statements, trying Captains A and B and C, instead of the prisoner, and literally miles away from the original issue. In a civil or criminal court, the prisoner's counsel would have simply cross-examined the first witness as to his statement about the English town, and by that powerful engine have shown the little value of the statement.

But what shall be said of the clumsy and effete method of examination, as laid down in the Queen's Orders and Regulations, and scrupulously carried out? The question is first written down on a slip, then carried across by an orderly to the president, then read by the president to himself, then read aloud to the court, then answered, and then written down by the prosecutor; or, if objected to, it is handed back to the questioner to be re-written; or, if still persisted in, it causes the court to be cleared and a debate with closed doors. What can be the value of a cross-examination on such a principle, where a perjured witness has handsome opportunity for deliberation? The whole bloom and essence of every question must be worn off by such a series of handlings. And yet the military books insist, with a gravity almost ludicrous, on the attention to be paid to the *demeanour* of witnesses, than which, they tell us, nothing is more important. The excuse for this clumsy procedure is, "that everything must be recorded" for the information of the commander-in-chief. If this be the true view, it might be conceived that a short-hand writer would do the work much more effec-

tually. To this end, too, are enforced some minute directions as to there being no erasures, for an answer once put becomes, as it were, sacred and almost eternal; it may not be erased, but the correction may be added to the proceedings. This mumbo-jumbo is absurd enough, and belongs to the middle ages, and is properly begotten of that imp, Red Tape, which rules in military government more than in any other known government whatever.

But if this procedure be ridiculous, can there be anything more illogical or unjust than the proceedings that follow the finding? First, there is the old-fashioned mystery of secrecy, and the unhappy prisoner is kept in suspense for weeks. This, to be sure, is of necessity, for the commander-in-chief or his delegate is supposed to be reading through all the proceedings. But with what view? To see if he be satisfied with the finding of the court. What a mockery is this! A grave investigation made by a jury of thirteen "intelligent men," on their oaths, all to be set aside at the whim or caprice of a single man. The only logical conclusion is, that the court below is *not* a jury, but merely mechanical instruments for taking evidence, and saving the commander-in-chief that trouble. This is a monstrous and a dangerous power to put into the hands of one man, and its monstrosity and danger have been too often illustrated within our own memory, where there has been interference to save friends and favourites. The true footing on which the matter should be put is this:—if there have been anything wrong and irregular, the commander-in-chief should have the power of sending the case back for a new trial, or he should have the prerogative, analogous to that of the Home Secretary, of advising the Queen to mitigate the punishment or to pardon the offender; or better than all, there should be a court of military criminal appeal. No one can imagine the abuses that have taken place, not at home here, where the wholesale eye of the press watches over the officer and soldier on his trial, but in India and the colonies, where ignorant generals, invested with an authority they are incapable of understanding or wielding, make the most astounding endorsements of the finding of courts. They "confirm," but do not "approve;" they "approve," but do not "confirm," and fall into the wildest extravagances. It is time that the whole system be overhauled, and the rough besom of reform set to work. It were better that the military reformed themselves than that outsiders took up the task. And there is a useful precedent for them. Nearly twenty years ago, a legal system that was sanctioned by many centuries of custom, that was, in fact, the whole fabric of law itself—the time-honoured system of pleading and procedure in the courts—was found to be too old-fashioned, slow, and cumbrous, for the times. The lawyers stepped in, fell to work, pulled down the old crazy chateau with all its winding passages and crannies, its priests' hiding-places in which many a poor victim was stifled, and set up a

spacious and airy block of buildings. They courageously, and at a vast pecuniary cost, reformed themselves. Let soldiers go and do likewise.

CONVERSION BY OPERA.

I.

BORN and reared in the very strictest principles of Scotch morality, deriving my origin from poor though honest parents, I had been a model boy and a more model youth. When I say poor, I mean we were not quite so wealthy as the Lord Haggis, whose estate was close by; and when I say honest, I mean that we had lived respectably, and without doing anything fraudulent. I was brought up by a dominie—virtuously, I hope—and was fortified every day with warnings against the corruptions of this wicked world, and the awful shoals and pitfalls of Babylon. Babylon was London.

Not to assume too much merit on this score, it should not be concealed that a great part of this sound inculcation was owing to the wishes—expressed or implied, or more probably assumed—of my Uncle Curriehill, in London. (We were Curriehills also; I was Samuel Curriehill, named after the greater avuncular Samuel in London.) His principles were of the strictest sort, and it was said that when he should be called away to reap the reward of a life spent very virtuously, some eighty or a hundred thousand pounds of that earthly dross, which even the good know how to accumulate, would be left behind. What was to become of this fund, was often anxiously speculated over by my parents.

Thus strictly brought up, and cut off from all secular enjoyments, there was one pleasure left to me which became a passion—which was music: more, it was operatic music. At one season, a strolling—is that too disrespectful?—company of Italian singers, who were the property of a speculating impressario, was coming round the provinces, being fed, kept, clothed, and paid by the speculator; being his, in short, body and soul, for a term of years. They came to our local theatre and gave all their operas—Norma, the innocent *bigamiste*, yet noble priestess; Lucrezia, savage, injured, and yet excusable; Trovatore, to which the local organs—the street ones, I mean—imparted a delightful familiarity; and, above all—alas! that it should have been below all—the seductive but erring Traviata.

Now during these days I had been secretly studying the violin outside the house, and had obtained a tolerable command over that king of instruments; that is to say, I could play tunes from tune-books, not very much out of tune. I applied myself to it with desperate energy, and at last, about the date of the arrival of the farmed-out singers, had ceased to play “like fifty stomach-aches.” My progress, too, in the principles of a rigid and ascetic virtue had kept pace with my fiddle-playing. But now I was to be tried by a sore temptation.

No sooner was the musical bill of fare set

forth in gaudy and gorgeous letters on every blank wall, than I was assailed by strange and furious promptings. Who that had music in his soul could read of the “unrivalled cantatrice,” Mlle. HOMINI, assisted by SIGNORA BACCO, with the tenor, SIGNOR PASQUALI, and the bassi, SIGNORI RORIORI e GRITTI, with the other officers of the company, in green and crimson letters, the “suggeritore,” whatever that was, and the “regisseur,” the conductor, SIGNOR BATTONI, and the leader, MR. BRITTLES, our own deservedly esteemed townsman (my violin master)—I say who could read through this gorgeous promise without his musical mouth “watering” prodigiously? Add to this being worked on in secret by Brittles, who was himself intoxicated by a distant communion with these immortals, and who literally raved during the lesson of the exquisite strains contained in their operas. What was the result? No doubt, had I consulted some of our elders, they would have warned me against the pitfall, and told me that this was but one of the pleasant shapes the arch enemy assumes for our destruction. But I did not heed. By a system of organised deception, appalling for its depravity in one so young—in which, too, I was abetted by Brittles, an accomplice before the fact—the thing was arranged. I went for a practice—a good long one, d’ye mark—at Brittles’s; and, instead, with a beating guilty heart, hurried off to hear Mlle. Homini in her grand part of LA TRAVIATA.

I declare solemnly I no more knew nor dreamed what was the theme of that unlucky opera, nor the peculiar character of the young lady with the dreary cough, or what she was about, or why the doctor came, or why the gentlemen friends were let in to witness her last agonies (unless it would have been difficult to make up a quartette without them), than did that infant not yet come into life, and who is so often unreasonably appealed to. I was simply entranced. It was a new sense—a patch of Elysium thrown open. I came home in a delirium, almost careless of concealment, defiant, ready for martyrdom in the cause of this new faith. Luckily, my severe parents took my rhapsodies as applying to the “tunes” used in the lesson. Tunes indeed! I should never play mere tunes again. From that hour, music took possession of me, and, above all, I was possessed with the witching, though incorrect (I mean in a moral point of view) melodies of the Travel’arter, as one of the men about our town pronounced it.

II.

A little later, a great event took place. Our Uncle Curriehill wrote to say he was solitary. He was curious to see what his nephew was like; so they might send him. If that nephew, Uncle Curriehill added, had any of the levity common to youth, or fancied he was coming to a profane house, where amusement, or relaxation, or anything but making of souls, was going forward, he was sadly mistaken. He added something about speaking his mind always as

long as he lived, and holding on by the Rock, which was a favourite expression of his.

When I arrived, I found him to be a lonely, austere, ascetical old bachelor. His house had an eremetical air, and my spirits sank as I entered it. I came at an unfortunate moment; for it wanted but ten minutes to the time for "exercises"—the spiritual ones—though I was hungry with a long and weary journey. The servants, a severe and unassisted company, were called up to punishment; and for nearly an hour we listened to Uncle Curriehill, officiating—on that night with extra unction and extra length to make a favourable impression on the newly joined member of the congregation.

Yet I soon found him out to be a good-natured and indulgent relation, and with a way to his heart. Before that night was over, I had discovered a coffin-shaped case in a corner, containing various rusty-looking quarto volumes.

"What! do you play, Uncle Curriehill?" I cried, in a transport. "Yes, you do. I know you do."

A little embarrassed, he said, "Well, a little. There is nothing profane in it, except one plays on the Sabbath. David, we know——"

"I am *so* glad," I repeated; "and what do you play? We can have duets."

He started now. "What, *you* play? Capital! we can have duets. And what do you play?"

"Fiddle, Uncle Curriehill," I said. "I'll fetch it." So I did. In a few moments the coffin was sacrilegiously opened, and in a few moments the room echoed with a delicious orchestral tuning, and we were scraping one of Archangelo Corelli's "Concertos," an old copy, I recollect, with a frontispiece of Archangelo himself, grim and bilious-looking, in a full-bottomed wig, and a list of his odd dances, "Sarabandas," "Gigas," "Corantos," and "Ye Follia," whatever *that* was. When we had done with Archangelo, he asked me to play a solo. I tried a national air. But I saw he was languid. I played another. He was equally unexcited. Suddenly I thought—rather was it some spiteful familiar who suggested it?—what if I played that mournful and most musical bit out of the Sinner's Opera—The Traviata? I began the well-known "Addio del passato," "tum *tum*, tumtiti umti, tum *tum*," plaintively, with an expression of agony, as the music directed me. In a second he was caught. His eyes lighted up. His head began to move from right to left. He was charmed. When I had played it through twice, he asked, eagerly, "What is it? The name?"

This was an embarrassment I had not thought of. To name the Sinner's Opera in *that* house, nay, any opera, was fatal. With wonderful presence of mind, I answered,

"An Italian air, 'Addio del passato,' Uncle Curriehill."

"I'll order it to-morrow, and learn it myself. Spofforth and Riddel will get me any music I want. Give the name exactly." And he took out his pencil.

Embarrassing again. "The Addio——" I said, shortly.

"Addio what?" he went on; "you said something else."

I stammered, "Addio perche folingo," summing up some stray Italian.

"Very good," he said, making a note of it. "I'll get it to-morrow, and we can play it in unison."

I had to play it several times over that night, and each time he was more and more enraptured. It came to eleven o'clock. He looked at his watch with a start. It was an hour past the time for canonical exercises. He gave a cry. He little thought that this had been the Traviata's work.

III.

Next day, after breakfast, he called to me. "Now you must play me that—that"—and he took out his note—"that delightful 'Addio perche folingo.'"

Suddenly it occurred to me to glide into the well-known Brindisi Libiamo, or Drinking Song, from the same nefarious opera. The *chique*—is that the word?—or swing of that sparkling morcel quite enraptured him. Again he had out his note to take down the name.

See the consequence of even one drifting deflexion from the paths of truth! Having fallen once, I had no alternative but to go on and coin another Italian name. This was the "Largo feroce," by the same author. His name? Ah, that I could not remember. I was not going to steep myself in deception.

He came back in the evening. "Very odd," he said. "I have been to Spofforth's, and asked them for the 'Largo feroce' and the 'Addio perche folingo,' and they can't get it—never heard of it. In fact, a young shopman fellow said it didn't sound like Italian, and that there must be a mistake. However, they are to look out for it."

This was a relief. But how curious if airs with such titles were to turn up? It would be one of the most curious phenomena ever known.

Meanwhile, the spiritual exercises proceeded with a stern and unflinching rigour. The only curious phenomenon was that sometimes my Uncle Curriehill's musical devotion actually encroached on the canonical hours of prayer. I blush to confess that when I found that a "Gigas" or even "Ye Follia"—what that *did* mean I don't know to this hour—had carried us past the hour of the Muezzin's Call to Prayer, I made no faint offer even to supply that officer's place, and remind my uncle that the turn for sacred things had now arrived.

But his passion for the Sinner's Opera had grown by what it fed on, and insensibly I had, one by one, taught him nearly all the airs in that masterpiece—an incautious thing on my part: yet the grotesque humour of the situation had a sort of charm for me. But I was on a precipice.

One day he had gone out to his music-seller's, to get some "real old music," and was absent very long. When he came back I read in his face that something had happened. In a falter-

ing voice, I asked, "Anything occurred, Uncle Curriehill?"

"This has occurred, sir," he answered in a voice of deep anger—"just step with me into the study. *This* has occurred, sir. I was in my music-shop to-day, and they showed me a new instrument, sir, and asked me to try it, and I *did* try it, and played that—*that* thing—that licentious drinking-thing that *you* brought into this virtuous house. And a gentleman at the end of the shop called out, 'Why that's the air in the——' What d'ye mean, sir? I thought I'd have dropped on the ground. How *dare* you introduce that corrupt, filthy stuff into this house—that noisome, unholy 'Traviata'?"

He used the figure of personification here with such force and graphic power that I actually looked round to see if there was any person answering the description present. He went on: "You are not fit for this place. You have poisoned the air. You are morally corrupt, sir. You had better go home at once." I answered with some penitence and pride mixed, that I was very sorry, but would not trespass on his hospitality longer.

That night we had no music, but sat moody and solitary. The hours dragged on, and we went to the "exercises," which it seemed to me he delivered with peculiar and special acerbity.

So went by several days, and not a single scrape was heard in the house. He scarcely spoke to me. At last one morning in a sort of defiant way, as who should say, "I am not bound to debar myself from amusement in my own house to satisfy your sulks," he took his violin and began to play Corelli—the "Gigas," then the "Corantos," then the "Sarabandas," and finally well through to the "Ye Follia." (Even at that moment of dejection, when my prospects seemed dashed for ever, I found myself speculating as to what the admirable Arcangelo meant by his "Ye Follia.") Uncle Curriehill warned to his work, played other tunes, and in a few minutes—could I believe my ears?—had glided into the wicked drinking-song out of the Trav—No matter, he stopped in a moment, catching himself in the act, blushed like a girl, gave an impatient "Pish!" threw down his violin, then laughed. He came over to me with his hand out. "My dear boy," he said, "there is no use carrying it on. I am miserable without my tunes. I am like a fellow that is in love with some low girl. What can I do? There is no harm in it after all, though the Rev. Mr. McCorkup turns up his eyes, and says it will light up in us all the—no matter. I don't believe him though; I mean, I don't think he can know."

"My dear uncle," I said with enthusiasm, "Verdi's music is now established all over the world. Kings, courts, palaces, lawyers, priests, and parsons delight in it, revel in it. It is the music of the day. It is driving out every other music. And as for the Trav—, I mean this particular production—I could show you something that would astound you. It is being played now."

He started. "Now!"

"Yes," I said, "every night to houses crammed to the roof. The Voltarelli, the lovely little creature, plays the part of the Trav—, I mean, of the what d'ye call 'em. The Queen and all the royal family, the ministers of state, the two Houses of Parliament, together with their wives and daughters, go indiscriminately."

He burst out warmly, "For shame, sir. I don't believe you. This is an atrocious libel. You are an abandoned fellow. Go away!"

"As I live," I said, "Uncle Curriehill, I am serious. Look here. The Morning Plush of yesterday—list of the company—at the Royal Italian Opera—fashionables. The most noble the Marchioness of Killfeathers and the Honourable Miss Downies (2), Lord Tyburn, Viscount and Viscountess Ketchup—and listen to this, uncle," I said, "what do you say to this?—*Lady Catherine Macgregor and the Miss Macgregors!*"

It came on him like a shot. For Lady Catherine was a shining light at our synagogue; had exercises herself; maintained a cold blue ascetical rule in Scotland; only lately had been seduced to London by the noble family of Tilbury's, who were to show them good society. What was the result? They were "fallen women," so the Reverend Mr. McCorkup called them.

My uncle groaned, yet the effect on him was not what it was to be on Mr. McCorkup. It was pure wonder and astonishment, and not at all to the prejudice of the "fallen women." He had such a high opinion of the sanctity of Lady Catherine, that it seemed to him not so much that *she* had sunk by going, as that there must have been a mistake about the nature of the thing itself. I saw his indecision, and struck in with a fresh blow.

"O, I have seen her name very often. She goes to everything. Never misses anything. I see the—the—the—" I stopped.

"La Traviata," said my uncle, absently.

"Yes," I went on, "is fixed for to-night. She will be there again with the Queen and royal family—the Prince of Wales."

"Of course," he said, testily, "he is included in the royal family. Very odd, very, very odd."

He went away ruminating. It was now about four. He went up to his room and shut himself in, perhaps for the private exercises. Towards six he suddenly came down.

"I have to go out," he said, "my dear boy, to meet a friend. I shall have business in the evening, and shall very likely dine at a chop house."

"Dine at a chop house!" I repeated, astounded.

"Yes. So make yourself as comfortable as you can without me."

When he was gone, I repeated to myself, "Dine at a chop house!" I could not make it out. Suddenly a little bill on the chimney-piece met my eye. It was to the effect that on that evening the "REV. WILKINS HUBBARD," who had spent seven or eight years in the

Sandwich Islands, would relate how he had been, so to speak, snatched out of the lion's jaws. This explained it, for Wilkins Hubbard did not belong to our severe Scotch denomination, but to a sort who were supposed to have "no saving grace;" whom our elders had settled were to be "cast out finally." Yet notwithstanding, Wilkins Hubbard was a remarkable man, and I had suspected Uncle Curriehill hankered after that particular spiritual fleshpot. That explained the whole quite clearly.

Left alone, a horrid secret, overpowering temptation entered into me. Here was an opportunity for a vision that had haunted me day and night. Here it was in my grasp. Wilkins Hubbard, "if he was worth his salt," I said contemptuously, "as a Sandwich Island missionary," could not take less than two or three hours for his discourse. If he be not good for *that*, let him retire from his vain and profitless task and give place to better men. While my Uncle Curriehill was drivelling in his lights, what if I?—the opera house was not a mile away, the curtain would rise at eight punctually (no matter when it came down). Yes, I would do it.

A hansom was passing. A wild cry arrested his progress, and brought up the serious manservant. (N.B. I never believed in his seriousness going beyond gin.) He thought I was off to Wilkins Hubbard and the Sandwich Islanders, but also thought it unspiritual in me to choose such a "carnal vessel" as a hansom. We drove away, I almost delirious, and got to the opera-house safely. Never did I feel so guilty—so full of crime.

Gorgeous sight! Dazzling, bewildering blaze of beauty! Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp was not to be named with it—no, nor the Arabian Nights. As for the squalid, mangey performance in our little country town, a "band" of fifteen, called by courtesy and with reasonable pride—for it was an enormous effort—the *orchestra*, I looked back to it with disgust. Here everything was vast, noble, superb. It took away my breath. It dazzled my eyes. It deprived me of my senses. But the music—what shall I say of that? How wild! how despairing! how it fell and how it rose—rose to those dark gallery latitudes where I was so happily confined.

Everybody about me too, in these dark latitudes, and whose faces I could not see, were so delighted too, that they might have heard—not a pin, whose sound is sure to strike on an attentive ear—but even a feather fall. I could hear deep groans of enjoyment from a musical amateur close by me, who, with his hand to his ear, seemed determined not to miss a note. He had none of that absurd assistance for "following the story" in what is called "a libretto;" and from ~~that~~ that I saw that he was a true amateur. It should be mentioned that the place was so utterly dark, it would have been impossible to see the page.

What a ravishing night! That bewitching lady, and her sad song, succeeded by the jocund

"Sempre Libera," which made every head wag, and every foot patter (the groaning amateur beside me was jumping up and down off his seat in ecstacy); and when it came to the Drinking Song (of the organs), then the sickly-looking lover, who even at that stage looked as if he was meditating something shabby and sneaking, came to the front with a gorgeous silver claret jug in one hand and an enormous racing-cup, as it seemed to me, in the other, and struck up the famous "*Liba-a-mo-libi-a-mo-tum tum-tumti-a-a-mo!*" the groaning amateur could not restrain himself, but jumped up, and in extravagant delight clapped his hands in a way that disgusted everybody near him.

Why dwell on the mere details of this enchanting night? When it came to the end—the sick room, and the consumption, and the gorgeously elaborate Italian Opera bedstead, catafalque-shaped, with which the bedsteads in the royal palace would but poorly compare; when the maid and the doctor came in, and when I marked her altered countenance, in which disease and the heartless absence of that poor creature, the tenor, had left their mark, I was deeply affected. The amateur near me was fiddling nervously with his white handkerchief. But when the poor creature (I mean the tenor) did turn up at last (not, I firmly believe, from any natural good impulse of his own), and he, and the doctor, and the maid, and the dying lady struck up a pathetic sick-room quartette, I could hardly stand it any longer, and the groaning amateur near me was mopping his eyes hard and fast. Blissful night indeed! Down came the heavy folds of the green curtain, and I came back to prosy life again.

Sadly and slowly I rose to go, stumbling in the dark over the steps and benches. Sadly and slowly I saw the groaning amateur rise to go also. He stumbled and groped over benches, and I felt drawn to him by a sort of sympathy. We had been both affected; we had been both touched by the same chords. He seemed an old man, and I was glad to observe that one so old was not dead to generous impulses. An irresistible instinct prompted me on a fresh and more helpless stumble on his part to rush forward and offer my arm—a civility which he hastily declined. But I was determined not to be rebuffed, and could be useful, at least, with a cab or something of the sort, so I followed him down the stair into the full blaze. The full blaze revealed his back, in which I seemed to recognise a familiar outline.

I hurried down the steps to get a good look at his face; but as I looked, he turned his head sharply away. I waited till he passed; we were both well under the glare of a lamp, and *then* I saw who it was. Alas! was *this* the way of going to hear the divine utterances of the Rev. Wilkins Hubbard?

Need I say what that night resulted in—a complete and entire reconciliation—not only in a reconciliation, but in a reform. Invidiously I may mention that the Rev. Mr. McCorkup was routed, and there were two particular stalls in

the Royal Italian Opera from which myself and my convert were rarely absent during the season.

NOT QUITE A MAN FOR A STRAIT-JACKET.

LITTLE more than forty years ago, when living in Nottingham, the writer frequently observed, passing to and fro in the streets a grave, middle-sized, middle-aged man, having something sufficiently peculiar in his costume to mark him out from the mass. He was, as the writer recollects him, of a muscular but active build, of a somewhat dark complexion, dark hair becoming grizzled, face-lines good, earnest, and expressive, but with a solemnity in them that betokened a mind seriously engaged in some important object. He wore a hat, broad in the brim and low in the crown, and altogether gave the impression that he was a half-pay naval lieutenant. In a while, circumstances brought the writer into the company of the naval lieutenant, and suddenly he developed into the agent of a great glass manufacturing firm, and something more. He had what the superficial world calls a crotchet, a hobby, and so steers clear of it. He had a notion which, at that time of day—only forty and two or three years ago—appeared to the public about as wild as a scheme for walking up-stairs to the moon: namely, a scheme to supersede stage-coaches, stage-waggons, and canal-boats, and to carry people and goods with great despatch, wherever they wanted to go, by the aid of iron rails and travelling steam-engines.

Here one is obliged to pause and reflect how difficult it is now, to bring back the sense of the supremely ridiculous in such an idea. Now, when people are daily and hourly careering about in long trains of little comfortable houses, with glass windows, cushioned seats, chauffepieds, anti-Macassars, and often carpeted floors, especially in foreign trains; careering in every direction all over the civilised world, and wherever that world extends, even to Moscow, India, America, and Australia—to imagine that forty years ago the realisation of this familiar state of things was treated as insanity, is very difficult. Yet here was this imagined half-pay naval lieutenant, but real glass commissioner, struggling and morally fighting to impress this idea on the world, and especially on the leaders and teachers of the world, parliament men, scientific men, literary men, and pre-eminently amongst the great journalists—and the man who simply wanted people to believe in such now palpable and common-place things as railroads was denounced as a maniac; a monomaniac, with one monstrous and impossible idea.

What said the Edinburgh Review of this Thomas Gray, with his one idea? "Put him in a strait-jacket." What said the Quarterly Review? "Such persons are not worth our notice." What said the enlightened people of England? Elderly gentlemen were of opinion that they should not be able to cross the railroads

without the certainty of being run over; young gentlemen, that the personal conveniences and comforts of their foxes and pheasants would be seriously invaded. Ladies thought that cows would not graze within view and sound of locomotive trains, and that the sudden and formidable appearance of them would be attended with premature consequences to bipeds as well as quadrupeds. Farmers were quite agreed that the race of horses must at once be extinguished, and that oats and hay need not, indeed, be grown, for there would be nothing to eat them. Artists declared that straight lines of railroad, and smoking, fizzing engines, would annihilate the picturesque; poets, that they would render the country intolerable. Wordsworth wrote inspiredly against them, and everybody said that *could* such things be realised they would be the most unbearable of nuisances, and, in fact, if people did make such things, nobody would encourage them by travelling by them. That was the condition of Thomas Gray, after he published a book on the subject in 1820, and such was the language that he was greeted with from high and low, from lateral and collateral, from neighbour and stranger. But Thomas Gray had got hold of a great fact, though yet unborn as it regarded the world at large, and scouted and snorted at by the whole world of engineers. Engineers were then all intent on devising a scheme for making tolerable highroads—these were infamous; but Macadam was already on foot, and about to show them the way out of that dilemma. But as to railroads for steam-trains, they treated the idea as sheer lunacy; and, says Gray, p. 109, "wasted their skill in bolstering up a system—that of roads—which mocked all their exertions." When the road system fell into the hands of the clearer-sighted Macadam, they then turned their speculations to canals, and, says Gray, "the infatuation of many of them was so great, as to cause them to recommend railroads (tram-roads) as mere collateral branches of communication to canals."

Gray continued to dilate, whenever he could get a hearing, on the magnificent advantages to be derived from a system of railways with steam-trains extending over the whole kingdom, carrying people rapidly, cheaply, and comfortably, carrying your letters at almost winged speed, sending your fish in a few hours from almost any port or part of the coast to the metropolis, instead of having it spoiled in its then slow transit by stage-waggon. These, and a thousand other wonders, his system of railroads was to perform; and the public lifted their eyebrows, and voted him a most consummate bore!

Mr. Smiles, in his *Life of George Stephenson*, speaking of several persons who advocated partial lines of railroads with steam trains, says, p. 168: "Thomas Gray, of Nottingham, was a much more sanguine and speculative man. He was not a mechanic, nor an inventor, nor a coal-owner, but an enthusiastic believer in the wonderful powers of the railroad system. Being a native of Leeds, he had, when a boy, seen Blen-

kinsop's locomotive at work on the Middleton cogged railroad, and from an early period he seems to have entertained almost as sanguine views on the subject as Sir Richard Phillips himself. It would appear that Gray was residing at Brussels in 1816 when the project of a canal from Charleroi, for the purpose of connecting Holland with the mining districts of Belgium, was the subject of discussion; and in conversations with Mr. John Cockerill and others, he took the opportunity of advocating the superior advantages of a railway. For some years after he pondered the subject more carefully, and at length became fully possessed by the grand idea, on which other minds were now at work. He occupied himself for some time with the preparation of a pamphlet on the subject. He shut himself up in his room, secluded from his wife and relations, declining to give them any information on the subject of his mysterious studies, beyond the assurance that his scheme 'would revolutionise the whole face of the material world and of society.'

"In 1820, Mr. Gray published the result of his studies, in his *Observations on a General Iron Railway*, in which, with great cogency, he urged the superiority of a locomotive railway over common roads and canals, pointing out, at the same time, the advantages of this mode of conveyance for merchandise and persons, to all classes of the community. That Mr. Gray had obtained his idea from Blenkinsop's engine and road, is obvious from the accurate engraving which he gives in his book of the cog-wheeled engine then travelling upon the Middleton cogged railroad. Mr. Gray, in his introduction, refers to railroads already in existence, and others in course of projection; and, alluding to the great improvement in the locomotive engines, he adds:

"The necessity of employing horses on the railway may be superseded, for the public benefit would soon be so evident to any common observer, as to admit of no comparison between horse and mechanic power; besides, the incitement given to all our artisans by the success of their ingenuity, would still prompt the further progress in this useful art. The prejudices of many persons will, however, oppose the system, therefore time must be allowed, with gradual use of those machines, to convince the public of their superiority in the same manner as steam-packets."

"The treatise seems to have met with a ready sale; for we find that, two years after, it had already passed into a fourth edition. In 1822, Mr. Gray added to the book a diagram, showing a number of suggested lines of railway, connecting the principal towns of England; and another, in like manner, connecting the principal towns of Ireland. In his first edition, Mr. Gray suggested the propriety of making a railway between Manchester and Liverpool, 'which,' he observed, 'would employ many thousands of the distressed population of Lancashire.'

"The publication of this essay must have had the effect of bringing the subject of railway

extension more prominently under the notice of the public than it had been brought before. Although little able to afford it, Gray also pressed his favourite project of a general iron road on the attention of public men—mayors, members of parliament, and prime ministers. He sent memorials to Lord Sidmouth in 1820, and to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London in 1821. In 1822, he addressed the Earl of Liverpool, Sir Robert Peel, and others, urging the great national importance of his system. In the year following, he petitioned the ministers of state to the same effect. He was so pertinacious that public men pronounced him to be a 'bore;' and in the town of Nottingham, where he then lived, those who knew him declared him to be 'cracked.'

"William Howitt, who frequently met Gray at that time, has published a lively portraiture of this indefatigable and enthusiastic projector, who seized all men by the button, and would not let them go until he had unravelled to them his wonderful scheme. With Thomas Gray, 'begin where you would, on whatever subject—the weather, the news, the political movement of the day—it would not be many minutes before you would be enveloped with steam, and listening to an harangue on the practicability and immense advantages to the nation, and to every man in it, of a general iron railway.'"

This statement, though seeming tolerably fair to those not informed on the subject, is misleading, and contains inaccuracies. What is represented as a pamphlet issued on the question of a general iron railway, by Gray in 1820, was, in truth, a solid volume of two hundred and thirty-three pages, and illustrated with plates of a train on the line, and other things. Again, Mr. Smiles says that Gray "was fully possessed by the grand idea on which other minds were now at work." The grand idea which fully possessed Gray, was that of a system of railways with steam trains extending over the whole kingdom, and superseding every other mode of conveyance for people on land, and for all kinds of goods which required speed. No such idea, it may be sufficiently shown from Mr. Smiles's own book, was occupying the minds of any other man at this time. The utmost stretch to which any other minds had reached was the introduction of locomotive trains on isolated pieces of road, and exclusively for the conveyance of coals and such heavy goods. Sir Richard Phillips had, indeed, thrown out an idea that such a system might possibly be introduced, as Dr. Darwin had done before him in the celebrated lines:

Soon shall thine arm, unconquered steam, afar,
Urge the light bark and whirl the rapid car!

But Gray had not merely thrown out a speculative loose idea, he had seized that idea and *worked it out, and demonstrated it*, in an elaborate volume, the result of years of labour and concentrated thought. Others, like Mr. James and Mr. Edward Pease, had contemplated the use of locomotive engines on particular pieces

of roads, which would, no doubt, have led in time to their extension into a general system. That general system, however, Gray, and Gray alone, had at this period at once foreseen and comprehended with all its stupendous advantages to mankind. The goodness of the idea had fully possessed and absorbed him, and caused him to abandon all other pursuits for a considerable time, in order to lay this system with all its details and all his calculations for its carrying out, before the "public" in his volume. This he did in an extraordinary manner; he calculated the cost of making such roads, and his figures are remarkably accurate, for calculations preceding almost all necessary practical data. He invented turn-tables, and tables or frames for shifting carriages from one line to another, very much as they now exist, for his drawings of them in his volume enabled others to appropriate and patent them. That the idea of a general system of iron roads and steam trains was as yet perfectly new to the public, is proved by the storm of ridicule and abuse which fell upon Gray, both from the press and the public. He was a wild enthusiast, a madman who ought to be shut up, and to whom no one could listen. As Mr. Smiles states, he not only issued edition after edition of his work, but he memorialised parliament, ministers, the Lord Mayor of London, and other persons and parties—and was treated as a lunatic, in the words of the *Quarterly Review*, "not worthy of notice."

And yet thousands and tens of thousands must have read his work, for in five years it went through as many editions, and we have now lying before us his fifth edition, dated 1825, and prepared with copious notes and additions in MS., for a sixth. By this time, however, his idea had familiarised itself to the public mind, Pease and Stephenson at Darlington had worked out practically a fragment of Gray's grand plan, the very recommendation of this Thomas Gray, as Mr. Smiles admits (see *Life of George Stephenson*, page 170): "Mr. Gray suggested the propriety of making a railway between Manchester and Liverpool." This had been successfully adopted and accomplished, and the public was satisfied of the practicability of the whole scheme. Gray was no longer a madman, but he was instantly forgotten. All the engineers who must have read and digested his five editions, with all his plans of cutting tunnels, building bridges, and his maps of a general line for England and Ireland, rushed forward to reap the fruits of the grand plan which they had so unmercifully denounced as insanity. Gray, as Mr. Smiles justly observes, had the disadvantage of being neither engineer nor mechanic, and, therefore, he gained nothing but scorn and odium for having elaborately laid down and shown the practicability and impending enormous consequences of the system now fully admitted and accepted. He petitioned for employment on the very line executed from his recommendation, and was refused. He lived to endure a still greater mortification; he lived to

see a sum of twenty thousand pounds subscribed for Mr. George Hudson because he had proved a daring and successful speculator in this system, while the originator himself was left to poverty. In such poverty Gray died at an early age: his end, no doubt, hastened by mortification.

Mr. Smiles, with the common bias of a man who has a hero to deify, robs Thomas Gray of his due merits, to adorn his protégé George Stephenson with them, who did not need such adornments, having substantive merits of his own. He says Gray drew his idea of an iron road with locomotives working on it from Blenkinsop's colliery line and locomotives at Middleton near Leeds, established in 1812. Thomas Gray not only avows this, but says that from this nucleus he saw and worked out his own system. But had not George Stephenson also Blenkinsop's locomotive in his eye when he went on to endeavour to improve locomotives? Undoubtedly. Blenkinsop's locomotives and the Middleton colliery line were well known to all engineers. And the simple fact is, that George Stephenson was not the inventor, but only the improver of locomotives. Stephenson was a man of strong and persevering faculties, and of extremely slow ideas. He went on slowly but steadily, developing as an engine-maker and engineer, but rather in the latter character from the suggestions of others than from his own ideas. For the conception of a great plan like that conceived by Gray, of a national system of railways, his mind was not constituted. This we find amply demonstrated by Mr. Smiles himself in his *Life of Stephenson*.

"In 1822, when Stephenson had made the Stockton and Darlington line of railway, Blenkinsop's locomotive line had been at work ten years; it began running on the 12th of August, 1812, and continued for many years one of the many curiosities of the neighbourhood." *Smiles's Life of Stephenson*, p. 72. "In his first locomotive, constructed at Killingworth, Mr. Stephenson to some extent followed Blenkinsop's engine," p. 84. Mr. Stephenson's own locomotives had been running at Killingworth eight years, being started on the 25th of July, 1814, p. 85. Yet during all this time, so far from Stephenson having acquired an idea of a general system of railways like Gray, he had not even awoken to the conception of a railway car being of further use than to carry heavy goods. We have Mr. Smiles's conclusive statement of this very extraordinary fact. "At first, passengers were not thought of; and it was only while the works were in progress that the starting of a passenger coach was seriously considered. An old stage-coach, called the 'Queen Charlotte,' was purchased and mounted on a wooden frame." Mr. Stephenson, so far from even suggesting this step himself, only thought the experiment "worthy of a trial." Yet Gray had amply demonstrated, for five years, and through five editions of his book, and in memorials to public authorities, and in magazine articles, that not only would railroads become a medium for passenger traffic, but that

they would become the great and ultimately only medium on land. Mr. Smiles says in depreciation of Gray, that he never got beyond Blenkinsop's engine and cog-wheels; it is sufficient to observe, as he has remarked, that Gray was no engineer. That was his misfortune. Had he been so, he would have come in for a share of the good things which his plans soon scattered among engineers. But Gray built the whole of his system on the certainty that engines and everything belonging to it would receive yet unconceived and unlimited improvements. Mr. Smiles, in the quotation from his *Life of Stephenson* just given, cites Gray's own words on this head: "The incitement given to all our artisans by the success of their ingenuity, would still prompt the further progress in this useful art." Mr. Smiles says also, that if Gray's steam train, as given in an engraving in his book, were once in practice, it could never have been brought up, but must have ensured its own destruction. He forgets that he himself says that this engraving was an accurate copy of Blenkinsop's engine and train which had already been safely running for ten years.

Truly, when Mr. Smiles says that Stephenson was the creator of the railway system, and not Gray, we must answer yes, exactly as the builder of St. Paul's was the creator of it, and not Sir Christopher Wren. The builder creates practically what the architect had created before. Gray and Stephenson have each his peculiar and substantive merits. The one worked out practically and unconsciously to himself what the other had planned, demonstrated, and energetically recommended to the nation through a course of years. Stephenson had his reward, and Gray had his:—the reward of nearly all great projectors—abuse to begin with, and ingratitude to end with.

There are many things in this curious book of Thomas Gray's which deserve notice. We will only instance two; the extreme slowness with which new ideas advance; and the humanity of one of Gray's motives for recommending a general system of railroads.

The idea of railroads, though not of locomotives, is very old. They were used in the Newcastle collieries in 1602, and soon became general all over the kingdom, yet notwithstanding the ease and rapidity with which carriages could be drawn on them, it seems never to have suggested their adoption on highways for coaches and goods waggons. Not till 1804 was the idea of attaching locomotives to railroad waggons, realised by Richard Trevethick at Merthyr Tydfil, in South Wales. It failed from the unscientific construction of the tramway. Thus it required from 1602 to 1825, that is, two hundred and twenty-three years, to bring railroads, in England, to a condition fitted for the public service. But, one of the most earnest motives of Thomas Gray for the introduction of a general system of railroads with steam trains, and it does him the highest honour, was to put an end to the horrible and unremitting cruelty inflicted on horses in running our stage-coaches.

According to a parliamentary report, it appeared that in 1819 not less than two hundred thousand horses were employed in stage-coaches and post-chaises only. That the whole of these horses were worn out in from two to four years, and had to be replaced at a cost of half a million annually; the wear and tear of the roads on which they ran, costing two millions annually. Of these horses, Mr. Waterhouse, of the Swan with Two Necks, kept four hundred; Mr. Horne, of Charing-cross, four hundred; Mr. Eames, of Fetter-lane, three hundred. These gentlemen gave evidence that the roads near London killed them all off in three years; and that the loose gravel on the London roads "tore the horses' throats out." The *Yorkshire Gazette*, of December, 1821, stated that "the extra demand of horses for coaches arises out of the new regulations of the Post-office, which cause the death of two horses on an average of three journeys of two hundred miles. Since they have tried to cope with the mails, and run ten miles an hour, instead of seven and eight, according to the new Post-office regulations, several horses have had their legs snapped in two on the road, while others have dropped dead from the effect of a ruptured blood-vessel, or a heart broken in efforts to obey the whip." It adds, "We cannot conceive this system can last long."

It was high time that railroads were introduced. The incessant demands for swift travelling and postal communication had thus driven the horses to the climax of their speed, and they could do no more; their legs snapped off, or their hearts burst; and they perished in stage-coaches by upwards of thirty thousand a year! If Thomas Gray had done nothing more than project, and successfully advocate, a system which put an end to this monstrous national barbarity, he would have deserved well of his country. It would still be a graceful national act if some substantial testimonial of his services were made to his widow and daughters, who subsist by teaching a small school at Exeter. To the government, or to the proprietors of railways, or to the millions who now so comfortably speed on the even railway to every quarter of Europe, such a token of grateful remembrance would be the easiest of acts.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XIX. THE APPEAL TO THE LORDS.

THE appeal case of *Ross v. Davis* was indeed, at last, ripe for hearing. After being tried by "intelligent" jurors, argued by careful counsel, tried by "upright and learned" judges, and tested by the grand principles of British law—after being "heard" by twelve or thirteen trained judges—sagacious, clever, and the very abstractions of sense and wisdom—it was now to be submitted to the highest tribunal of the land.

Only the year before, Sir Charles Withers, Knt., M.P. for Belhanger, had been at the bar, her Majesty's Attorney-General, carrying important law bills through the House, receiving enormous fees in heavy cases—will, ejectment, claims to peerages, and the like. A short, round-checked glistening man, with a soft, lisping voice—slow, with oily utterance and insolent tone, which his companions at the bar called impudence, but which his followers—he had no friend—said was fine sarcasm. This seemed a sort of constitutional failing with him, and almost uncontrolled; and there was always going round some story of "Withers's last," received with half amusement, half disgust. How he had said to Mr. Justice Bonnycastle, a mild, inoffensive man, whose only fault was a slowness arising out of his wish to do justice, "If I suc-ceed in leading your lordship's mind, as-scyewming for the moment that there *is* something on which I may exercise that operation," was said, with open indignation, to be outrageous, and going too far.

The old gentlemen had not yet arrived, and that golden chamber, glittering so gorgeously and æsthetically, where, with very little extra preparation, High Mass might have been sung at any moment, was in possession of only a few loungers. It seemed like a gorgeous lantern whose panes were filled in with stained glass, and which served as an illuminated casket for a glorified "McKillop's Reports." Yesterday the appeal had been "on;" the late Attorney-General, now become Lord Belhanger of Belhanger, and his round full cheeks, glistening even to stickiness, under his great wig, had heard all the arguments. But the defendant's case was now presented in a way it had never been done before. They had secured the present Attorney, viz. Sir John Render, a masterly Chancery lawyer, of gentle and persuasive manner, with a tranquil voice, who, his enemies said, preached, but with whose ability they could find no fault, and he opened the case to their lordships. The old gentlemen were listening. These few legal noblemen looked dwindled and deserted, and very much as if they had got locked up by accident in a rich cathedral. Lord Belhanger, the Chancellor, carefully listened, put a question now and again, took a note now and again. When the Attorney-General had finished, he looked round with a dry smile, and screwing up his tiny eyes to the ceiling, as if he had discovered a new carved monster which he had never noticed before, said:

"I suppose there is see-omething to be said on the other side?"

Mr. Buckhorse, eminent at the equity side, started to his feet, saying:

"They were quite ready, and ready to state to their l'dships," &c.

But between the law lord who was irreverently known as "Old Bile-'em" and Lord Belhanger raged a feud of long standing, arising out of sarcasms on the part of the latter, repeated when he was in the House. Thus, when there was a question of a junior being

put over Prideaux's head ("Old Bile-'em" had been Sir John Prideaux), Lord Belhanger had insolently asked, "*Has* Prideaux a head?" Such a speech naturally inflamed any political animosity that existed between such eminent men.

During Mr. Buckhorse's argument, therefore, Lord Prideaux was noticed to be very attentive, carefully taking notes, and helping on Mr. Buckhorse with encouragement; on the contrary, the Right Honourable Baron Belhanger, of Belhanger, Lord High Chancellor, &c., was seen leaning back with a resigned air, with his light eyes searching the ceiling for a new grotesque, and tapping his fingers together in measured beats, sometimes without taking down his eyes, and as if he were addressing the question to the grotesque, he would ask:

"Then, as I take it, you are contending for the overthrowal, in this instance at least, of the old principle of the inadmissibility of hearsay evidence?" which Mr. Buckhorse would disclaim with much feeling and even pathos.

"No, no, no, my lud; I would not offer an insult to your l'dship's understanding——"

"Ah, that's another view," said his lordship, without removing his eyes. "Go on, please."

But the noble Lord Prideaux came to Buckhorse's assistance.

"As I take it, Mr. Buckhorse, your argument is this: you don't import the question of hearsay at all?"

"Quite so, my lud, quite so," said Buckhorse with alacrity, as if a light had broken in on him, though it is likely he would have adopted, with the same enthusiasm, any question coming from the same quarter. "But what I was pressing on you, my lud, was this;" and then Mr. Buckhorse artfully began to insinuate that very point of hearsay which he had disclaimed. On which the Chancellor's eyes again sought his favourite grotesque, and the Chancellor's mouth began to blow something that seemed like a faint whistle. Not at all disturbed, Mr. Buckhorse had gone on in his even monotony until again interrupted.

"I had dee-reamed," said the Chancellor, "that these were all prin-ci-ples which the merest tee-yro would re-ject. How-ever, go on."

"Cern'ly, m'lud," said Mr. Buckhorse, as if this was encouragement. And thus the argument did go on, until concluded.

Ross was present in the little pew close to the bar, biting his nails impatiently, chafing, stamping, and beating the rail of his prison, as if it was the bar of a cage. He saw that the Chancellor was not "with him," and he glared at him as if he would spring out and finish him. His solicitors were close to him, a little moody and impatient, auguring mischief, and specially impatient with their client. At times he would go out and get fresh air in the great hall outside, where he would be seen pacing angrily, and muttering to himself, "I'd like to catch that old stuffed cockatoo in a dark place. It is easy for him to lisp and be impudent,

perched on his soft wooll sack. I'd like to roll his round face in it until he choked." Then he would come back again, and perfectly scandalise his advisers by his behaviour in that sacred presence.

This was during the argument. Mr. Tillotson, though interested and anxious, too, had not come. It was now the morning for the judgment. Ross was there half an hour before the time, with a wan and haggard face and very bright eyes. The solicitors were there with an ominous manner.

"You would not take advice," they said. "Whatever turns up now is on your own head. No client ever had such chances. It's too late now, and we must only go through with it."

"And pray isn't that what I have always said?" asked Ross, insolently. "Are you trembling for your costs? By George, you will be 'stuck' if it goes wrong. I could almost laugh. I'd give something handsome to see your faces. It would serve you right, too, for you have bullied me enough between you, God knows. But I think we shall pull through after all. I am sure of it. Don't you think so? Come, give a poor devil of a client some comfort!"

This was one of his odd changes to which they were accustomed. Mr. Dawkins shrugged his shoulders.

"This would have been all very well a year ago," he said. "You should have taken Mr. Grainger's advice and mine."

Mr. Grainger was there, too, a little excited also. He shrugged his shoulders. "Even Mrs. Tillotson—" he said.

"*Even Mrs. Tillotson,*" repeated Ross, mimicking. "Even all the old women in the parish. I tell you," he said, with fury, "that was just the reason. Do you suppose I was going to give up to a low whining usurer of that sort, whom I'll expose yet, and ruin, too, before I die? What does he mean? He began this years ago. Let him take care! I have not done with him yet. If this goes wrong, by the living—"

"Hush, hush!" said Mr. Dawkins, shocked at such language in such a place. "This is very bad, sir. This is not the way to do things."

"There, they are coming in."

Yes, they were coming in, the Chancellor pink-faced and glistening ("beautifully shaved," said some one), pinching his lips as if he had a chocolate drop between them, and the two or three stout old gentlemen in rather shabby old suits. It was, indeed, like an empty cathedral. In the whole place there was not half a dozen. Even the counsel, except a junior or two, were not there; and Ross, with grinding teeth, heard a gay young barrister (with a bag heavy with law books) show in a party of ladies for a moment, and led them away with the remark, "No interest—not worth waiting for. Only a trifling case."

He did not see the scowl that Ross followed him with. "I'd like," said the latter, "just to walk after him, and beat his impudent face with his own bag, and before his ladies, too."

But here they were giving judgment.

It was a very short matter. There were only three noble lords present. The tall yellow lord gave his reading of it. He had no doubt on the matter. The case had deserved all the attention it had received, and certainly, *prima facie*, it would seem that a view which had been so carefully adopted, first, by a jury, then by that eminent tribunal below, would be the right view. In that view he concurred, &c.

"He is with us breast high," whispered Mr. Dawkins, with great alacrity.

"What did I tell you?" said Ross, whose breath was coming and going. "You are an unbelieving lot. Ah! my head is worth the whole gang's."

"Hush, hush!" said Mr. Dawkins, angrily.

Then came the stout lord. His judgment was merely a sentence—a mumble—and he had done.

Mr. Dawkins stood with his hand to his ear trying to catch it.

"What's that? What did he say?" asked Ross, almost aloud.

Mr. Dawkins, without taking down his hand or looking at him, angrily jerked him with his elbow, and whispered a counsel.

"What did he *say*?" said Ross, angrily. "Curse you! Will you speak?"

Mr. Dawkins gave him a ferocious look. "Hold your tongue," he said. "He is *against* us, and so will be this one too. It's all up!"

The Chancellor had begun in his slow sweet monotone. It was one of the most extraordinary cases that could be conceived, not on account of the subject-matter, which would not too severely try the powers of *even* a county court judge, but on account of the inconceivable perversions which seem to have directed the eminent persons who had had to deal with the cause. Those eminent persons, he was obliged to say, had been all astray in the views they had taken, and almost, as a matter of course, he should be under the necessity of ordering a revision of the whole proceedings. In short—

At this point something of the truth seemed to be breaking in on Ross. He looked from the Chancellor with a miserable air of doubt and uncertainty to his agents. "*What's* he saying?" But the faces of these gentlemen were growing darker and darker. Something like baffled fury was in Mr. Dawkins's face. He did not even answer the question; for Ross, in a few moments, would almost cease to be his client. It was like the change in the position of a criminal after verdict and sentence. But Ross did not accept this view.

"Have you no tongue in that infernal head of yours? If you don't speak, I'll expose you before the whole place."

Mr. Dawkins's partner rose hastily, and, taking his client by the arm, led him away. "It is all up with you," he said. "The Chancellor is *against* you."

Ross was agast, and stared at him a little wildly. But he did not follow as yet. "I know that, of course; but he hasn't—"

"I tell you it is the other. It is final now; and I give you warning, you had better make us up some of our costs at once. We can't afford to be out of our money any longer."

"I won't believe it," said Ross, wildly. "Why, it's ruin. I may as well go into the union. Do they call this law and justice? Where's the verdict and the judgment of that court? What does it mean?"

CHAPTER XX. COUNSEL WITH THE CAPTAIN.

THAT night Mr. Tillotson was pacing up and down his study in a state of excitement. Even his own household had noticed the curious change that had come over him lately, not only his old moodiness, but a fretfulness and ill temper. He went very often to the window, and looked out impatiently. "Ah," he said aloud, "*she* can give him small comfort. Let him make what he can of his time." Then the cab drove up, and Mrs. Tillotson returned.

She came at once into the study. The soft face was bent down before him, and the soft voice pleaded. "If you are not busy now, could I speak to you?"

"Asking leave to speak with me!" he said, bitterly. "Well, well, what can I do for you? Money?"

"No, no," she said, hastily; "it is about this—this—wretched business of to-day." As the words escaped her, she saw their inappropriateness.

He coloured. "I see," he said, "your husband's victory is a wretched business. What do you wish me to do?"

"I know," she said, ardently, "that you are generous and noble, and even chivalrous. No one has ever made such sacrifices; and though I have no right to make such a request, still I would plead with you for that poor miserable Ross. We are rich, and do not want this estate. He is so unfortunate, and so unaccountable for his actions, that I am sure you will be glad to do this. In fact, for my sake, I would ask you to do this: and you are so good and so generous, I know you will not refuse me."

Mr. Tillotson's lips quivered. "This I must altogether decline," he said, rising and going to the window. "It seems ungracious to resist so warm an appeal, but I have thought of it and made up my mind. I have given up, in fact, being the quixotic, the soft, good-natured man of society which I have been for only too many years, and have determined to be like other men—business-like and practical. Really, it is being too generous to fight a battle for so many years only to give up the fruits on the very day of the victory! No, I must decline. I can do nothing for that man. You are witness of all I have endured at his hands; and I am a little surprised that you should be such a persistent advocate. Of course, you have your reasons."

She looked at him calmly. "I have," she said. "He was my earliest friend. He loved me, as I believe now, for years steadily. I should be heartless if I had not some feeling

for him on the day of his ruin. If we cast him off now, he will go from bad to worse, and end miserably. I foresee as clearly as I am looking at you, and his ruin will be on *our* heads."

"My head I suppose you mean," he said. "Then I accept it. But it is his own work, his own doing. It is his own concern what becomes of him, in spite of *your* eloquent pleading for him. I don't care. The law must take its course, as they say. I shan't interfere with it. I am not called on to do so. And here, if I do not go too far, I may state what my wish and desire is—I suppose command is out of the question. I thought I had shown very clearly what I wished, that you would not hold any communication with the man who has behaved as he has done to your husband. I only say this for the decency of the thing, and for what we owe to society. But now I repeat what I said before, and must require that you do not see, hear from, nor write to this man, nor to any of his friends. These are my wishes. I neither desire to hasten nor retard his destruction."

She looked at him with wonder. "You are sadly changed," she said, warmly; "you used not to speak so coldly or with such inhumanity. What is the reason of all this? What have I done? What crime is there in asking you to be indulgent to an old friend?"

"An old friend," he repeated sarcastically, "and what crime is there in *my* declining to have anything to do with a desperate man whose life has been but one long insult to me? Is *that* his recommendation?"

She answered with more excitement: "No, his recommendation is that he is in misery and want, and that he is unfortunate. You must not ask me to accept this prohibition. I cannot be so unkind as to abandon him to despair. I am sure you will not. When you come to think of it calmly, your real nature will show itself."

"I repeat," said her husband, "what I said before. I desire, I *forbid* that you either see or hear from him. You, of course, can act as you please. As for assisting him in any way, or interfering with the law, my final answer is, I decline to do either."

She looked at him a moment with a calm gaze in which were mingled surprise and grief, then left the room without a word. From that hour the demons of coldness and distrust, bitterness and pride, descended with all their hideous shadows and found quarters in that house.

In her own room that afternoon, Mrs. Tillotson sat with a flush upon her cheek, the golden hair resting on her hand. She had a proud nature, and with all her softness and sweetness it had been known in her own family that she always was sensitive to resent what was injustice to others. "*And after all the sacrifice I made!*" This she said over very often and aloud. Her heart was full of pity for the luckless and unfortunate Ross. Yet she knew not what to do. But after much thought she saw that the only

course was to follow out what her husband had said. Still with what consequences was such a resolution fraught—a desperate man whose rage and fury at being neglected might lead him into violence, and above all, that unseen and mysterious danger, which she shrank from and yet which could not be neglected. Suddenly an idea came to her aid.

CHAPTER XXI. A FATAL MISTAKE.

ADA went to her writing-table, and was presently busy with a letter, for all was to be concluded that night. It was addressed to Ross, and ran in this shape:

"MY DEAR WILLIAM. If you have ever had any love for me, you will do what I now implore of you to do. If you would not make us both miserable, if you have any trust in the regard I had for you, you will comply with my dearest wishes in this matter.

"Lastly, I do not conceal it from you, you have caused me much wretchedness. Independent of all, I feel for you now, and the misfortunes you have suffered. The way you have behaved to us has added to my own trials. This cannot go on. Matters have come to that pass that it is necessary for our own peace and happiness that I do not see you any more. If it is any comfort to you to know this, I tell you it is a deep and painful sacrifice to me; for you have hitherto listened to me, and I believe I have had some little influence over you. But it cannot go on longer. There are reasons which I must not tell you. You must not come to our house, that is, if you do not wish to make me wretched. I have undertaken solemn duties, and you know me well enough to know that whatever is my duty I am determined to carry it through. You must not come here again. I will not see you, and you must give over all that unruliness, for which I can make allowance, but which will only lead to confusion and misery, and disturb our household. I know I can rely on your faith and affection, especially when I tell you that on your complying with this wish of mine more depends than you can conceive. I have a presentiment at this moment that something dreadful is impending, unless you comply. Therefore I implore and command you, dearest Ross, to comply with what I wish. Save me, too, from the importunity of others of your friends. Do all this, and my prayer is that you may be rewarded.—Yours,

"A. T."

This letter she sealed up, and sent down to be despatched at once. Then she at last had the feeling on her of having made a perfect sacrifice, and of having done, at all risks, "her duty." At dinner she met her husband with a confident calm gaze; but he shrank from hers. During that meal he seemed to be trying to speak of indifferent matters. When it was over, he asked had she done some little commission which it was agreed she should do. Accepting this as a proof of interest, she answered eagerly that she

had not, but had fixed to do it "the very first thing in the morning."

"Ah," he said, "exactly. It is the same with everything I ask or wish for."

Again her eyes fell on him with a look of calm, almost cold interrogation. He went on impatiently: "You understand me. You know what I mean. I am not worth obeying in *anything*. I am only fit to be hoodwinked and deceived. Ah, now you begin to follow me. I told you what my wishes were about Ross, and how faithfully you carry them out. You saw this man to-day. I know it. You can't deny it!"

She drew herself up with a wounded, almost shocked air. "It has come to this, then," she said, sadly. "I have lost your confidence. It's of no use trying to convince. But I may tell you, if I did see him and write to him, it was only to give him a final warning, and for the special object of carrying out what you wished and desired."

Again he was humiliated and repentant. He covered his face. "I am a miserable and suspicious creature. I know not what I am coming to. But I hear and know such things. I dare not trust even my own heart. Forgive me, forgive me. Do not think too meanly of me, but only show me that it is so, and I will try for the future and drive out this miserable demon of mistrust."

Her face cleared in a moment. The old softness and sweetness came pouring back into it, and was diffused over it like a glory. "Stop," she said, with a sudden instinct. "You will see from his letter; from the answer that he will send. You may read it; will *that* convince you?"

"Ah, yes!" he said, eagerly.

"Yes; but you will have indulgence for this wretched weakness, and after this I promise solemnly——" But a little trouble and doubt had come into her mind. "Ah, if you sincerely loved and trusted me, you would not need such a poor proof. Do not ask this, or humiliate me so much. It will be better not."

He was cold again in a moment. "You proposed this yourself," he said.

An hour later, as she had anticipated, arrived the answer, written in characters of impetuous fire: a fierce scrawl. It was brought into Mr. Tillotson's study. She sat alone in her drawing-room. With a fluttering heart she waited, for she began to feel a little nervous. What if that mad, foolish Ross had written things—she hadn't thought of that. But in a moment the servant came in, and laid the letter before her. It was sealed—sealed with wax; it had not been opened. The old confidence had come back to her husband. He had trusted her. He had not read. Good, generous, noble nature! With a fluttering heart she read this epistle, in a different key to his usual strain:

"Your letter finds me ill and in bed, and hardly able to draw a breath. I suppose there will soon be an end of me, and of my sore and miserable life. The sooner the better I say, for

I am heart-sick of the whole business. Since the world began, was there ever a poor devil came into it so worried and persecuted?

"Well, now you write in your old way, warning me desperate consequences may ensue, fatal to us both. Fatal to us both! Exactly; if you would make me supremely happy, show me *that*. It seems to me the only course. As for him, don't be afraid. I am afraid I must be very ill indeed when I can speak so calmly. The fact is, I am dead beat. Only mind this, if he is making your life miserable, as you seem to say he is, trying his infamous Blue Beard tricks, his glarings and suspicions, if I was in the agonies of death, I should get up and come to you, and scourge him round his own house. Ah! that is all I care for now. I have something on my cheek to remind me of him, and if I could get strength to get to him and pay him off that old score, which I think of day and night, I think I should be easy in my mind. I have never forgotten it a moment, and I can tell you at this moment—for I have got the glass over and am looking at it—it is ugly and angry enough, and smarts like hell. Ah! I shall have *his* cheek under my arm one day.

"My dear sweet, I wish I had your soft face looking down on me at this moment, and your nice musical voice in my ear. O, you stupid, stupid, insensible child, not to have understood me long ago; not to have known that I was a rough proud savage, that would not let any woman know that I loved her. I knew you were mine, but I would not let you know I was yours. I often think of that wretched day at the vestry door, when he was inside signing the books and paying the fees. Ah! if you had told me all you told me *then*, only half an hour before! Yet only for you he had never been so near his grave as at that moment.

"Well, you want to know what I shall do now. He shall have a little peace till I get well, and after what you say I *shall* get well; for there is business waiting for me, something that will surprise both you and him. Never mind now. I say no more. I am getting ready a screw, a single turn of which will make his white face turn like a sheet of paper. We have hunted up something that he thinks is what they call 'secret as the grave,' and which he thinks he made all safe years ago. You little know *what* you have married. No matter; all in good time. Wait, only wait, my sweet darling (you see what a mood I am in). We'll let our friend shut his eyes a little, and *then* we shall see.

"R.

"I have got some of your dear old letters here, and am going to read 'em, though my poor eyes are dim enough. There's sentiment for you!"

She could hardly draw breath, thinking of the narrow escape they had had. It was, indeed, fortunate; though *she* had nothing to reproach herself with. Yet the sense of this relief was lost in a fresh agony of doubts and trouble. What was this secret the restless

frantic Ross had been "hunting up"? For long, indeed, had some such thought crossed her suddenly and uneasily, but she had always dismissed it. This looked circumstantial, even seen through Ross's strange ravings.

What did it mean? What was coming? But then how generous—how noble of him! What confidence he had placed in her!

Alas for Mr. Tillotson's confidence! At that moment he was below, in an agony of grief and misery, and almost fury. Scarcely knowing what he did, he had read that letter, and put his own seal to it.

CHAPTER XXII. GATHERING PROOFS.

MR. TILLOTSON was now deep in some momentous concerns of the great bank. These tremendous operations required great attention and much secret planning. Yet it was remarked that he had grown absent and almost indifferent, which was the more surprising, after they had remarked his sudden change to buoyancy and happiness, and how the clouds had passed from his brow, and how, in short, "that marriage had been the makings of him." Alas! now it seemed that some other cause had been the "unmakings" of him, and the puzzled men at the office could only set him down as "the oddest, queerest cove," whom there was "no havin' any way;" and one gentleman with whom Mr. Tillotson had been obliged to be severe, indemnified himself by repeating privily that that 'ere fellow would be as mad as a hare before long, or his name was not Baker.

The "operation" that now engrossed the company was Mr. Lackson's grand contract for the Railway Roofing Company. The great and daring scheme for covering in the seven united railways had been much talked about, and various grand iron companies had striven hard to obtain the contract. But the diplomacy of the great Lackson, who knew peers and ambassadors, and specially our ambassador out at Madrid, had secured this concession, and he had generously determined that the company with which he was connected, and only that company, should have the bringing out or floating of the project. It was whispered that huge bonuses, bribes in fact, had been offered by other societies to draw off the great Lackson, as was indeed only natural in the case of a man who had but to touch anything to turn it into gold. But he steadily held to his friends, spoke as little as usual, and yet had put some fifty or sixty thousand pounds, with chance of much more, in the way of the bank, without claiming any special credit for the motive.

If he spoke little to the board, he spoke much less to the chairman. He seemed to be shy of him, as one of the officers put it. He rarely discussed anything with him, and when Mr. Tillotson was giving his views, looked towards the window and became abstracted. It was to be seen that he held the chairman's financiering at a very low level. In private, however, his tongue was sometimes more free, and he said to a friend or two on the board, who admired his success and

paid him a slavish adulation, "that it was a great pity they were all going so slow!" "It was the most splendid concern in London, and might be worked to any extent, and without any rash speculation." He never went beyond this, or vouchsafed details. Yet such words sank deep. Latterly, too, it had been noticed that he had relapsed into his gloom and abstraction, and began to whisper. And it was a pity a more go-ahead sort of man had not been "brought in."

Mr. Tillotson, too, had himself always seemed to shrink from the great Lackson. He was too gentle to pronounce any opinion; but when the great Roofing Company question came on, he calmly but firmly opposed it on what were indeed fair and cautious principles. That day's discussion was long remembered in the office. Mr. Tillotson had not come down until late. He had stayed at home in his study, in that abstraction which had lately come upon him. There was some bazaar at Hanover-square, and Mrs. Tillotson had gone there in her carriage, exquisitely dressed, to go through some promised duty. For with all her troubles she felt it her pride to go through the offices that society required of her, and dressed and kept up such importance as became the wife of the rich Mr. Tillotson. From the window of her Brougham flashing was seen that sad and pensive face, and men in the street looked after it and wondered whose the "gorgeous hair was."

The discussion had come on about four o'clock, and was continued for a couple of hours. Every moment Mr. Tillotson had been growing firmer, and more animated, and more convincing in his opposition. He showed that such schemes were full of dangers; pointed to other concerns that had followed the same course, and had toppled over and come down in ruins; was there not This House, and lately That House, which had been the talk of every one? Money was the commodity it was their business to deal with; money had brought them success, and to money they should keep.

Up to this point the great Lackson had remained silent; but when he saw this confirmed opposition, a look of impatience and scorn came into his face, and to the astonishment of his colleagues he began to speak for the first time, with great energy and almost sarcasm. "I find," said the great Lackson, "I have made a mistake. I have come among a cautious set of gentlemen. I was asked, I was pressed to do this. There were people who almost thought it worth while going on their knees to me. I never moved in the matter. It's been a great sacrifice altogether, and I tell you the truth now plainly; this sort of fiddling work and picking one's steps couldn't pay me—couldn't pay me. I tell you the truth, I did not come in on these terms. There's no harm done, you know, except so far as it's made me lose time and money. But still, I tell you plainly, I *can't* stay, and it's better we should part now. I can't afford to lose my time, and so, gentlemen——"

And the great Lackson pushed back his chair, and, to the consternation of the board, prepared to go.

Mr. Tillotson only smiled; then said, gravely, "I have spoken what I thought would be best for us all to do. Decide now, irrespective of me. But I warn you, take care what you are doing."

The great Lackson, who seemed to be now, in respect of reserve and cool phlegm, no longer the great Lackson, answered with great temper and heat, "What do you warn them against, sir? What are the grounds of your caution? I require, and am entitled to know. Perhaps there are *suspensions*," added the great Lackson, scornfully.

It was growing dark. The sitting had been protracted far longer than usual. There was anxiety in all faces; but they seemed to go with the great Lackson's. The danger of losing that influential man's support struck them with terror. At that moment the lamps were being brought in by the bank servants, one of whom laid a card before Mr. Tillotson, and whispered that "the gentleman was in a hurry, and required to see him particular."

He got up carelessly, perhaps glad of the excuse, walked over to the table where the servants were still putting final touches to their lamps, and read the name. It ran:

"MR. CHARLES EASTWOOD.

I wish to see you: you can guess for what."

The servants never noticed the half cry, the strange gasp of horror and surprise, the twitch that passed over his face. The card fluttered down from his fingers, was picked up reverently and offered to him, but he could not see it. He stood there fixed, staring, trembling; his eyes turned on the place where the card had been.

Suddenly he roused himself, and walked slowly from the room. One of the bank servants went solemnly before him and officially threw open the door of the parlour. Before it closed, he heard the visitor's cheerful voice say, "Well, fifteen years since that night, Tillotson, and *here I am back again.*"

That interview lasted more than half an hour. Once Mr. Tillotson's pale face came to the door and bade the same servant bring him down a blank cheque, which was done. At the end of this time the visitor and Mr. Tillotson came out together; but another Mr. Tillotson, a worn, stooped, dazed, and hopeless man. The same bank servant showing out the visitor, a wild, inflamed, unmoneyed-looking man, heard him say:

"Take care, my boy, now; be up to time, you know." To which the other replied in a sad and almost broken voice:

"You may depend on me!"

Mr. Tillotson almost tottered up-stairs. When he entered the board-room again, he looked round on them all with a listless wonder, as if surprised to find them still there. He put his hand to his head, as if in pain. They called to him, "What do you say now, Tillotson?"

But he still seemed in a dream. He took his place mechanically in the chair. The great Lackson was still warm with his protest, and was

ready with fresh scorn and defiance. But when the chairman was again asked and pressed by many voices, he to their surprise answered listlessly, he was willing with all his heart. Let them do as they pleased; by all means let them "bring out" the Roofing Contract Company. And the great Lackson, much mollified at this adhesion, said, how at last he believed they would begin to turn the corner and do a little brisk business for once.

It was dark when Mr. Tillotson wandered home. Mrs. Tillotson had come in from her bazaar. A lamp half turned down was in his study, but he did not take the trouble to raise it; but he paced round and round, with his head sunk hopelessly on his chest. He had that twisted crumpled card in his hand, on which his eyes were strained:

"MR. CHARLES EASTWOOD.

I wish to see you: you can guess for what."

What did this mean? or was this some sword of Damocles hanging for years over his head, and whose fine thread had at last given way? With his eyes still fixed on the card, he muttered to himself over and over again, "How did he know? how did he know?"

Then at last he raised his lamp, sat down to his desk, and covered his face with his fingers. Any one looking in as he drew away those fingers, would have seen almost an old man's face there. Then he mechanically took up the letters and papers that had come in since he had been away. The letters he did not open; but among them was his bank-book sealed up, newly sent home from the bank, having been posted up duly, and as he opened it carelessly, out of its pocket slipped the sheaf of returned cheques, stamped, and scored, and punctured all over. Some seemed to strike him as they caught his eye, and drawing his lamp over, he began to go over them eagerly. He found one he was looking for—that for two hundred—turned it over with a sort of bitter smile, read Ross's endorsement on the back. Then he looked at the backs of them all, one after the other; on two he found the name "*Grainger*," and at last on one—nearly the last—and which was for fifty pounds, two endorsements which made him start and turn pale, and hold them close to the light, to be sure of his senses. They were:

*Ada Tillotson.
Charles Eastwood.*

A cold dew broke out on his forehead, and the paper fluttered away from him. He fell back in his chair, and covered his face with his hands. Who could resist proof like this? The most charitable, that is, the most foolish, must be convinced indeed. It was now become only too plain and simple. He was the old, weak, soft fool that he was always to be, the poor destined victim. He had taken *her* from the one she loved, and it was only natural that with

her beauty and loveliness thrown away on such a being as he was, whom gratitude had forced her to marry, she should long to be free again. She was pining for her old love, and had set herself to hunt out this secret he had kept so long. It was she who had brought this man to the surface again. But he would not be the soft victim they took him for. He was not to be sacrificed between them. They would find *that*.

When dinner-time came, Mrs. Tillotson, coming down, was told that her husband had left word for her that he had gone to his club, and would not be back till late. This was a new and strange feature in his life; for though he formally belonged to a club, he had been never known to dine. But now he had gone there gloomily, and men asked each other who was the dismal parson-looking man at the little table. What, Tillotson, the great banking fellow, with the handsome wife? Lucky fellow every way, but should get rid of that hang-dog look.

The next day he was at his bank again, the same listless, vacant man of business he had been the night before. They were all in a bustle and ferment, getting ready details of the new project that was to be "brought out." Nothing could be handsomer than the terms offered by the great Lackson on the part of the Roofing Contract Corporation Twenty-thousand Bonus. So many shares at so much. In fact, the whole thing on any terms they pleased. Gorgeous geographical descriptions were already in type, and read like a financial fairy tale. It was flowery and descriptive. It gave a graphic picture of the streets of the town, like an extract from some tourist's book, and then went off into figures and boundless calculations. This glowing picture would be in all the papers.

The next morning the great Lackson explained everything with singular fluency, addressing himself with great deference to the chairman, who accepted everything in the same passive, indifferent way he had done the day before.

This rather puzzled his brethren, who were affectionately anxious concerning his health. About two o'clock he said he did feel a headache, and that he would go home, which the great Lackson strongly recommended him to do, adding that he would do the work for him with pleasure.

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CHAPTER VIII.

"I NEVER saw a piece of knitting in such a mess in all my life! What *were* you thinking of, Madge?"

Aunt Gough uttered this mild pleasantry in the fulness of her satisfaction, some days after that happy evening on which Horace had told me that he loved me. They all knew it now. Dear uncle had kissed and blessed me, mingling with his tender words some prudent cautions as to the necessity of waiting, and as to our youth and inexperience. But he was pleased. I knew that, and the knowledge made me inexpressibly happy. As for waiting, that was not hard to my mind. Of course we were young. Of course we were inexperienced, and without settled prospects in the world. But we loved each other, and our love was approved by those whom we most honoured and regarded. Surely that was happiness enough, to fill years of waiting, should years be necessary. Horace was not quite so contented to accept Uncle Gough's words of wisdom. He chafed a little, in his impetuous way, at being told of his youth and inexperience.

"Young!" he said to me, when we were walking alone together. "Does your uncle know that I am turned three-and-twenty?" Horace looked very solemn as he announced his attainment of this venerable age. "If he had said that I'm not good enough, there might have been some reason in it. But if my dear girl is content to take me only because I love her better than all the world beside——"

"No; because I love *you*, Horace."

"My own Margaret! If you are content, angel that you are, I don't see who need object."

"Dear Horace, be reasonable. Can anything be more kind and generous than Uncle Gough's behaviour? Of course he is right when he says that our youth——"

"There it is. Our youth! The fact is, fifty-five is getting to be thought the right age for love and marriage. I wish I was as old as De Beauquet. Upon my soul I do!"

"Perhaps, Horace, in that case the objection might come from *me*, and not from uncle."

"I always say absurd things when I'm angry," said Horace, wiping his eyes after an outbreak of laughter. "Everybody does."

I don't know whether everybody does, but I know Horace did. And what could be more absurd than the idea of his ever being fifty-five? My bright, impulsive Horace!

All this brings me back to Aunt Gough, and my tangled knitting. One of the servants had found it in the porch and taken it to my aunt, and she, divining the circumstances under which it had got into such a chaotic state, resolved to have her small joke at my expense. Horace and I were sitting with her now, having come in from the walk in which we had held the foregoing discussion as to the necessity for patient waiting.

"What *have* you been doing with your knitting?" said aunt. "I wonder who is expected to wear a stocking like that!"

"O, aunt, it was Horace. He was twisting it about in his fingers."

"And, pray, how came Horace to get hold of your knitting? I hope you don't mean to knit *his* stockings in that way, or he will think I have made but a poor housewife of you, after all my pains."

"Do give me a chance of testing her soon, Mrs. Gough," cried Horace, eagerly, improving the occasion. "We have been having quite a dispute, Margaret and I, and I am afraid Mr. Gough is all on her side. Do throw in your influence on mine. Do take my view of the case!"

Horace went over all his arguments to prove that we were both rather elderly, and to show that in three months, at the utmost, his prospects would be sufficiently assured to justify him in taking a wife. He was very eloquent in his pleadings. At least I thought so, and so, I suspect, did Aunt Gough. The truth is, Horace could be much more eloquent in speaking to her, than he could be in speaking to my uncle. I have said that Aunt Gough was highly sympathetic. And sympathy was to Horace the atmosphere in which he lived and breathed easily. There are strong militant natures to whom strife and the hope of victory are bracing and pleasant; but his was never one of them.

My aunt had been ailing ever since the visit to Meadow Leas. We could not trace any signs of positive disorder, but she got no stronger, had no appetite, and was incapable of active exertion.

This was the only cloud in our Heaven. This, and Anna.

My sister had been so variable and uncertain in her humour since that evening I have spoken of, when I spoke to her in her bed, as to try aunt sorely. Aunt's own temper was the sweetest and most placid in the world, but her nerves were unstrung, and she was liable to swoon on unusual excitement. Anna was not always angry, not always sullen, not always tearful, not always unaccountably gay and boisterous, but all these moods chased each other across her mind with startling rapidity. She was especially inconsistent towards Horace. At one time, she would be so sweet and sisterly to him as to make our hearts glad within us. Next moment, the merest trifle, the turning of a straw, something so slight as to be imperceptible to us, would ruffle her, and she would chafe and frown and treat him with an arrogant scorn that wounded me beyond measure. Once, I was angered out of patience, and spoke to her sharply, in Horace's presence. To my surprise, she was soft and humble in a moment, coming and kneeling by me with her face hidden in my lap.

"Margaret, I love you!" she said, in so low a voice that I, with my head bent down to hers, could hardly hear it.

"My dear love, I know you do. But, Anna, because you love me, you should be good to Horace." The dark clustering curls on my knee shook themselves petulantly from side to side. "Yes, Anna. I am sure he is very good to you. And you know he is to be your brother. Come! Give him your hand and be friends." With her face still hidden, she suffered me to take her cold little fingers, and put them into Horace's outstretched palm; and so there was peace again for a time. But all this, as I have said, was trying to my aunt. Uncle Gough saw less of it than she did; but even he saw enough to distress him.

"I tell ye what, my bairn," he said to Anna, "a little change will do you good. I am thinking you're not quite well, Nanny. I shall pack you off to Meadow Leas for a week or two, and beg Farmer Gibson to feed you entirely on strong ale and rabbit pasty. You're growing as slender as a hazel-wand, my bonny bairnie."

"I'm not a bit ill," returned Anna, decisively, "But I think I should like to go to Meadow Leas."

The idea was acceptable to us all. It had already occurred to me, that Anna's excessive irritability might be owing to incipient illness; and, indeed, she was looking worn and thin. So it was decided that she should go to Meadow Leas for a week or two.

I have not yet said anything as to the manner in which old Mr. Lee received the announcement of my engagement to his son. In truth, it is not a topic on which I am able to say much, for Horace would never exactly tell me what his father's words had been; but I gathered that he had expressed some disappointment in

the matter. It must have been on the score of my personal demerits, for I knew that an alliance with the family of James Gough of the Gable House was, in a social sense, the best he could have expected for his son. However, the old gentleman was all cordiality to my uncle, and all condescension to me. He treated me with elaborate, I may almost say oppressive, politeness—when he thought of it. Sometimes, however, he did not think of it. And I am afraid I liked those times best. He readily undertook to make the necessary arrangements for Anna's stay with the good people at Meadow Leas. But, before she went away, we had two pleasant surprises. One, was a letter from our dear friend in Canada; the other, which concerned Horace, I shall come to presently.

Dear little Madame de Beauguet wrote most cheerfully, and there was no mistaking the fact that she was a perfectly happy woman. They had not long arrived out when her letter had been written, but she had a great deal to say about her new home already, and about her "good-man."

"Do you remember your giving him that title?" she wrote. Her letter was addressed to my aunt. "I do. And nothing ever was more appropriate. Put the strongest possible accent on the first syllable, or on the second syllable, or on both syllables, and you will be perfectly right all ways. He is the best creature in the world. Am I not a fortunate woman?"

Then our old governess sent kind love to Philosophy and Will-o'-the-wisp; and made many inquiries about Horace:—"that most charming and civil of young civil engineers," as she called him. "Tell him that I have his parting flowers safely pressed in a book, and prize them above everything; and that my good-man says he hopes no young lady will be jealous when she hears it."

This set us wondering whether M'sieu' had discovered Horace's secret—*our* secret—and then they all laughed, and we wandered off into happy foolish talk about ourselves. Madame de Beauguet's pleasant letter having been read and re-read and discussed in full family council with great relish, then Horace brought forth his news. And this was the second surprise.

"I have had a letter from Mr. Topps, of Birmingham, sir," he said, addressing my uncle.

"From Mr. Topps, eh? I didn't know you kept up any correspondence with Mr. Topps."

"No, not exactly correspondence; but this is a business letter."

There was a look of triumph in Horace's eyes as he handed it to my uncle: though he assumed a sober unconcerned manner, as who should say that to a man of his age and position, a business letter from Mr. Topps was an every-day kind of matter.

"Am I to read it?"

"If you please, sir."

"What is it, Horace?" I asked, eagerly. But he hushed me with a motion of his hand, and we all waited silently until my uncle had finished reading the letter.

"Well, my boy, I am very much pleased with this. Indeed I am." My uncle took off his spectacles, and held out his strong right hand to Horace, giving him a hearty grip. "It does you credit, and you may justly be proud of it."

"I am proud of it, sir," answered Horace, with ingenuous glee. "I am glad that you should see—that you should have this opportunity of convincing yourself—that is, I mean, that my prospects—"

"Yes, yes, I know. You are proud and glad that I should be made to understand on such excellent authority, what a trustworthy responsible rising gentleman I am to have for a nephew, and what a very slow old coach I must be to think it well for him to wait one single day, before taking all the cares of the world on his shoulders! That's it, isn't it, laddie?"

Horace coloured, but answered with a smile: "Well, you have put it in your own words, sir, but I suppose that is it."

"And now, mayn't We know something of this great business?" asked my aunt, from among the cushions in her arm-chair.

Then Uncle Gough, with Horace's full consent, told us what were the contents of Mr. Topps's letter. That distinguished engineer retained a kindly remembrance and a high opinion of his former pupil, and was willing to put a good thing in his way when the occasion presented itself. There were some new waterworks to be erected in a small northern town just on this side of the Scottish Border, and Mr. Topps had been applied to, to find some competent person to design and superintend their erection. He himself was much too "eminent and expensive," as Mr. Lee would have said, to be asked to undertake the business. But the chairman of the water-works company, being acquainted with the great Birmingham engineer, had written to ask his advice. "And my advice is, that they should employ you, Lee," wrote Mr. Topps in his letter. "I have every confidence in you, and, if you will undertake it, it may lead to better things."

Better things! What could be better? So I thought. But to Mr. Topps, from his eminence, probably the whole matter looked small enough.

"What does Rotherwood say to it?" asked my uncle.

"Well, sir, he sees no objection to my taking it. Clinch, his articulated pupil, can do all such work as I have been doing during the last half year."

The only drawback to our happiness was, that Horace would have to go to the north, and remain there some time. But that would not be just yet. Some six months must elapse before the arrangements could be so far advanced as to necessitate his presence. And six months seemed quite a long time to look forward to, when I was nineteen.

CHAPTER IX.

I WAS once told, when I was a very little girl—too little to be told so—that I should find good and evil, joy and sorrow, succeed each

other throughout my life, with the regularity of the chequers on a chess-board. I have found this true in the main: true in the sense in which it was intended to be understood: but I have never found it to be an accurate illustration of the alternations of bright and dark in our daily existence. The dark spots have come to me—and, thank God! the bright spots too—but by no means with the rigidity of outline and regularity of succession, suggested by the chess-board simile. Absolute blackness has been rare—rarer, perhaps, on the whole than absolute whiteness. I have known both. But they were divided from each other by infinite gradations of more or less neutral tints, and not by sharp well-defined lines, where the black ceased and the white began. In truth, I think that sharp well-defined lines are not common, either in nature or human nature.

I am led to remember the "chess-board," by thinking of the cloud that came over us soon after our pride and triumph in Horace's good fortune. Dear Aunt Gough grew very ill. Still without any special disorder that could be discovered, or that the family doctor chose to define to us; but very weak, and very ill. She seldom left her chamber now, and, Anna being away, I was with her a great deal. She would sometimes feebly protest against the constancy of my attendance on her; but I said, and said truly, that I could not have been happy if I had left her to receive loving care from other hands.

"It is but selfishness after all, dear aunt; for, as soon as I am away from you, I begin to fidget, and to fancy that something has been forgotten which ought to have been remembered, or something left undone which ought to have been done. And then my self-conceit brings me back to see to things myself."

"But Horace will think me very selfish, my love, if I engross you altogether. That must not be."

"I am sure he will not think that, aunt. Besides, Horace has been away a good deal, himself, lately."

It was true that Horace had been away a good deal lately; away from Willborough. Before he should take his departure for the north, there were two or three matters to which Mr. Rotherwood wished him to give his personal superintendence. Among others, there was the draining of Meadow Leas. I have said that Mr. Rotherwood desired it, but Mr. Lee was very anxious, too, that Horace should see to it himself. Had not Sir Robert sent for him to the Hall purposely to speak of it? Had he not shaken hands with him, and presented him to my lady in the drawing-room? "Clinch could do it all right enough," said Horace. But nevertheless, thus influenced, he went himself to Meadow Leas. So it followed that what with his frequent absence, and what with my attendance on my aunt, we were not quite so much together as would otherwise have been natural in our position. But he rode over from his father's house (where he was staying to be near his work) almost every day, and brought my aunt many a

beautiful gift of fruit and flowers from the green-houses at the Hall. Horticulture had not then advanced to the rank of a fine art, but Mr. McGee, Sir Robert's Scotch gardener, had some pretensions to science notwithstanding, and I can bear testimony to the perfume of his roses, and their beauties of form, colour, and size. These floral offerings gave great offence to Stock, who lost no opportunity of decrying Mr. McGee's professional skill with much bitterness.

One evening my aunt had fallen into a doze, having desired, before she composed herself to rest, that I would go out and get a breath of air. So, after stationing one of the maids in the room with injunctions to call me when my aunt should awake, I went down-stairs and passed through the kitchen, in order to reach the garden by the back way. The servants were enjoying the pleasant evening hour, after the business of the day, and the maids were sewing and gossiping over their work. Stock sat near the open window, in an appropriately hard Windsor chair, with his pipe in his mouth, contemplating the glories of the kitchen garden. I never passed Stock without a few words of greeting. I had a knowledge—how acquired, it would be hard to say, for never by word nor look was he apt to show any touch of tenderness—that the old man had a soft corner in his heart for my sister and me.

"Stock, how well your early vegetables are looking!"

"I'm not sure as you knows much about it, Miss Margrit."

"I hope I know a little, Stock, a very little."

"Vara little," said Stock.

"The peas, for instance. Are they not unusually promising?"

"There's a Providence above all peas," returned Stock, "and equally above banes. An' it's fort'nate as there be."

Stock had not the least idea of being irrelevant. But he was given to solemn-sounding phraseology, and believed, I fancy, that there was something vaguely meritorious in the use of pious words—words not especially applicable to the matter in hand, but which seemed of themselves to impart an odour of sanctity to his discourse, be it what it might. Stock was an ignorant narrow-minded old man, no doubt. But I have since heard pious talk, conducted on much the same principle, by people with the means of knowing better.

"It's fort'nate as there be, or it's little peas nor yet banes, as the master 'ud have see'd on table this year. Bill Green, he done his best to ruin of 'em; but there's a Providence beyond Bill Green."

It was so well understood by this time that Stock's revilings of his subordinate were to be taken as mere figures of speech, expressing more his own consciousness of old age and rheumatism than anything else, that no one uplifted a voice in defence of Bill Green: who, by the way, was as honest and hard-working a lad as could be found.

"I'm going into the garden, Stock," said I,

"to get a fresh posy for my aunt." This was an indiscreet speech.

"Ah!" growled Stock, "the missus she don't want no posies out of this here garden. Not now, she don't."

"O yes, she does, Stock. She thinks no flowers so sweet as our own."

"No more there bain't. None. The missus is right there, Miss Margrit. I knows summat about flowers, or I ought to it, and I'll 'fy all England to grow sweeter flowers nor oun. But it ain't sweetness now, nor yet completeness, as is the hobject wi' some. It's to have 'em wallopin' big uns. That's the hobject. You grow your flowers wallowers, an' you'll do."

"I don't think that, Stock."

"Well, Miss Margrit, I ain't a goin' to try it, whether or no. I allus done my dooty, and I allus means to. I say as them flowers as young Master Lee brings here is wallowers, and nothin' else *but* wallowers. And I say, as one o' the 'lect, that I shan't find no wallowers where I'm a goin' to. Me—and a few more—we shan't be called upon to keep company with wallowers."

"Mr. Lee only meant to give my aunt pleasure, Stock. I'm sure he always admires the gardens at the Gable House. And you must not say anything unkind of Mr. Lee, Stock, because I love him very much, and I'm going to be married to him, you know."

"Ah, sure. Well, well, well. No, I han't got nothin' to say agin' young Mr. Lee. Goin' to be married," he pursued, musingly. "Little Miss Margrit. Ah, sure! Well, my dear, may the Lord have marcy upon ye!"

This was not exactly encouraging. But I understood Stock; and though his deep-set black eyes looked stern, and no muscle of his hard brown face was softened, yet I knew that the old man had a tender place in his heart for the orphan girl he had known so many years. I passed on to the garden, and was busy gathering my nosegay, when I heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs entering the stable-yard, and almost at the same moment a window in my room was softly opened, and Hester, the maid, called to me that my aunt was awake, and that Dr. Dixon was with her. "I will come in a few minutes, Hester, before the doctor goes." As she turned away, and shut the window, Horace came hurrying across the lawn, all booted and spurred from his ride.

"My dearest Margaret! I am so glad to find you here! Each time I have come lately, you have been mewed up in a close chamber."

"Dear Horace, I am very well. It does me no harm."

"It does *me* harm, for I see so little of you. And how is Mrs. Gough?"

"Dr. Dixon is with her now, and I am going in, to hear his report."

"Going in! It seems to me, Margaret, that you grudge every moment you give to me." He had drawn my arm through his, and we were slowly pacing down the garden walk; I, with my basket of freshly gathered flowers in my hand.

"O, my dear Horace!"

"Well, it does seem so. Of course it is right that you should be kind and attentive to your aunt. I am sure I am nearly as fond of her as you are. But you seem so indifferent, Margaret. As if you didn't care to be with me!"

His tone was petulant, irritable, and unlike himself; looking at him more closely, I saw that he seemed harassed, and was very pale, now that the flush of exercise had faded from his face.

"O, Horace!"

If I could have told him but a tenth part of the joy it gave me to be with him! But no, I could not. And yet the tone of his voice, the sound of his footfall, the glance of his eye, made my heart overflow with happiness. And surely he might have known this. If he did not, I could not make him know it by any words of protestation. I have said that it was my weakness to be too keenly sensitive to reproof, especially where my affections were concerned. I always saw that *other side* of things too plainly. What he thought and felt, was almost as vividly within my perception as were my own thoughts and feelings; but though I knew he was wrong, I could not plead my cause. It would have been better to have spoken frankly and fearlessly, setting forth the strength of my love; it would have been better, even, to have grown angry, and flamed at him as my sister might have done. But I could only withdraw into myself and bear my hurt in silence.

We walked to the end of the path without speaking, and, when we turned to go back towards the house, he suddenly took me in his arms, upsetting the flower-basket and scattering its contents upon the gravel. "No, my darling!" he said. "Don't mind me. I don't believe it."

"Believe what, Horace?"

"That you are anything but the sweetest, dearest, truest, most unselfish girl in the world."

"I am not that, Horace; but do me justice. At least I am not indifferent."

"No, no, no, my own love. I am sure you are not. Forgive me."

We kissed each other with wet cheeks, like two children, as we were.

"Look at my poor flowers, you bad boy. There! Put them all in the basket. I would not have old Stock see one blossom lying trampled on the ground, for more than I can tell. I must not keep Dr. Dixon any longer. You will come to aunt's room when she sends for you, and tell us all about Anna? Of course you see her constantly?"

"Yes; I—have seen her. *Must* you go now?"

I only shook my head in answer, and ran into the house. Uncle Gough was in my aunt's room when I reached it, and Dr. Dixon. The doctor was a mild middle-aged man, well known and much respected in Willborough. He was brother of that Mr. Dixon, the organist, of whom I said in my childhood that he "played so kindly."

"Good evening, Miss Sedley." The doctor stretched out his right hand, which held a leather driving-glove. I had never seen Dr. Dixon with that glove on, in my life, but he always carried it.

"How do you find my aunt, sir?"

"Mrs. Gough is better, decidedly better. If we can get a little strength, a little tone, we shall do very well."

"I am so glad!"

"Yes; a little tone. Do you know what I have been proposing to your uncle, Miss Sedley?"

"Proposing! Nay, it's all fixed and settled, lassie," put in my uncle, who was sitting by his wife's chair, gently smoothing her frail hand with his broad heavy one.

"I have been proposing," continued the doctor, who had a mildly obstinate way of sticking to his own form of words, "that Mrs. Gough should go for some months to the sea-side. To get tone; a little tone, you know."

"I believe it would do her great good, Dr. Dixon."

"Yes, yes; that's the thing, Madge," said my uncle. "She shall go, next week, to Beachington. I wonder we didn't think of it before."

"It wouldn't have done before, my good friend," said Dr. Dixon. "It is early in the season even yet. But I have been proposing something else, Miss Sedley."

"No, no," interrupted my aunt, faintly. "I won't allow it."

"Pardon me, my dear madam. I have also been proposing, Miss Sedley, that you should accompany her."

Accompany her! Go away from Horace during the short time he had yet to stay in Willborough! I felt ashamed of my selfishness even as I thought this.

"Of course I will go with her, Dr. Dixon, if she will let me."

"It is too bad to ask the dear child," said Aunt Gough. My uncle looked at me wistfully.

"I'm loth to part the bairn from her sweet-heart," said he. "But yet I know she'd wish to do whatever she could for her good aunt. She's the best lassie in the world, doctor."

"My kind darling uncle," said I, "pray, pray, don't speak in that way, as if you were asking any favour of me. I am thankful and rejoiced to be of use."

"Of the very greatest use, Miss Sedley," said Dr. Dixon, taking up his hat. "You are very patient, very gentle, and very pleasant to look at—three inestimable qualities in a nurse." And with those words, the doctor betook himself down-stairs.

"Bless thee, my bairn," said my uncle.

"Horace will never forgive me," said my aunt; "but he'll have Madge to himself all his life, and perhaps I may not be here to trouble him much longer."

CHAPTER X.

SEA and sky, sky and sea, sea and sky! Deep blue, or pale green, livid under the clouds, dazzling in the sunshine, sleeping with a slow

long-drawn respiration beneath the moonlight, dashing yeasty foam mast high over slanting sails reddened by the dawn; beautiful, terrible, wonderful always; the great waters lay stretched out before my eyes for many, many weeks. From my chamber window at Beachington, I looked forth upon them, every night and morning. There was nothing to interrupt my gaze, as I strained it to the far horizon. I have stood looking, looking, looking, until all the life within me seemed to concentrate itself in my eyes, and I felt as though I were floating poised like a scagull in mid-air, with the fathomless heavens above me, and the fathomless ocean beneath me. O, sea and sky! O, sky and sea! O, the small throbbing human heart within, and the vast heaving waves without! O, the old, old story!

My aunt had borne the journey from Willborough—it was not a long one—better than we had thought she would; and, for the first fortnight of our stay at Beachington, her improvement was most rapid and encouraging. After that, she sank again a little; but they told us these fluctuations were to be expected, and we were hopeful. My uncle remained at the Gable House. He had come with us to Beachington, and had seen us settled in our new abode; then, he returned to Willborough; and Anna came back from Meadow Leas and kept house for him. I had left home with a heavy heart—heavier than the mere temporary separation from Horace should have made it; for he had parted from me almost in anger. I cannot say that he absolutely thought I ought to have refused to accompany my aunt, but he seemed to think that I ought to have made it very evident how much the going cost me. And how could I do that, without wounding my beloved benefactors!

"Horace," I said, "think, pray think, what they have been to us two sisters. It seems to me that an almost more scrupulous performance of loving duty is due from Anna and me to them, than if they were our parents."

"Duty! Yes; duty is your god, Margaret. You will weigh out the affection you owe, even to the last scruple, in the scale of duty. So much for my aunt; so much for my uncle; so many drachms for Horace; good measure for Horace; he is to be my husband. Margaret, if you knew what real love was, you could not be so calm and cold at parting."

I assigned what excuses I could for him, but I came away with a heavy heart. His first letters, after my departure, made me sweet amends. They were so full of love and sympathy, of kindly inquiries for my aunt, and affectionate solicitude for me, that I resolved to be happy again. My aunt, too, was apparently gaining strength, so the first days of our stay at Beachington were bright. We had brought a letter from Dr. Dixon to a brother practitioner at Beachington, one Mr. Bertram Norcliffe. This gentleman, besides being skilful in his profession, was an accomplished scholar, renowned for his acquaint-

ance with Greek and Latin and the modern tongues. When Dr. Dixon told us about him before we left home, we declared we should be frightened to speak to so awful a personage. But we found ourselves quite able to speak to him, and we soon came to like him very much. He was not young—nearly as old as Dr. Dixon, I dare say; but he was unmarried, and lived alone in a beautiful house some three miles inland from Beachington. He took an interest in my aunt's case, and, as he said it was essential that she should be kept cheerful and amused, he would come and sit with us, evening after evening, talking so unaffectedly and pleasantly that we entirely forgot all about his learning.

Of course we mentioned Mr. Norcliffe frequently, in our letters home. At least, aunt did, when she was able to write; and she generally added a few lines with her own hand to my weekly report to my uncle. In those times, the postman was not so frequent an apparition at everybody's door as he is now. A letter was a serious matter, either to send or receive. And, besides, between us and Willborough there was an awkward cross-country post, so that I seldom despatched a packet to the Gable House oftener than once a week. Horace's movements were very uncertain, as he flitted about between Willborough and Meadow Leas and the Hall. He even made a flying visit to the north, to consult with the chairman of the water-works company, and to reconnoitre his ground; and he accomplished the double journey thither and back again, and transacted his business, all within the space of five days. We thought this a very wonderful achievement. (I forget how few hours are requisite to do it in now.) As Horace seemed to have no settled abode, I generally sent my letters to him under cover to Uncle Gough or to Anna at the Gable House, and I frequently received his, through their hands, in the same way.

Gradually, by slow degrees—degrees it was as impossible for me to trace as the shifting hues of sunset on the western waves, which began with rosy lustre, and left the deep waters dark—I found a change in my lover's letters. It seemed as if some spell were cast over him—as if a shadow had interposed itself between him and me—and at length one dreary fortnight passed, and he did not write at all. But I fought against the dread that lay coiled up coldly at the bottom of my heart, and I endeavoured to be cheerful. How good my aunt was! How patient, how unselfish! I have never seen recorded the story of a purer, sweeter life than Lucy Gough's. You, my godchild, are named after her. Hers was the large heart, which, cleaving strongly to its own, yet could embrace all suffering souls in a divine rapture of charity. As you go through life, you will meet devoted wives who grudge hard-earned fame and fortune to their husbands' peers; admiring sisters, who delight to jeer at their brothers' rivals in the race of life; doting mothers, who, wrapping their own little ones warmly in the soft

shelter of maternal love, will yet bring themselves to turn a cold stern front on the forlorn defenceless infancy that peeps in, shivering, from the hard outer world, at the bright flame burning on the hearth of home. But not of these was my aunt. Perhaps my own trouble taught me to understand and value her, better than I had ever done before. Sorrow comes to teach such lessons. The worst was, I could not quite keep it to myself. "Has Horace written this week? What does he say?" She would question me thus, and I could not always keep back tears, though I tried hard. Though I tried very hard.

It was now drawing near the time at which I understood Horace was to take his departure for the north—within a day or two, as I reckoned—and I was feverishly hoping for a letter. A packet had come from the Gable House one morning, directed in Anna's hand, and containing a long letter from my uncle, and a short note from Anna for my aunt. But nothing from Horace; not one word. There was an incomprehensible allusion to my indolence as a letter-writer, made by my uncle. "Madge is a good correspondent to me, my love," he said, writing to my aunt, "but urge her not to let us old folks engross all her pretty letters. I think Horace feels hurt." What did this mean? I could not understand it.

The day had been oppressively hot, and the moonless night came down from a brooding sultry sky. We sat with open windows, listening to the plash, plash, of the tide upon the shingle, and catching now and again, through the gathering darkness, the distant flash of some white-crested wave leaping high above its fellows. Mr. Norcliffe was with us, and we had all been sitting silent for some minutes.

"How the sea booms to-night!" I said. "Is it not a hollow, threatening noise?"

"Yes," he answered, "I know the sound well. We shall have a storm."

While he was yet speaking, rapid wheels and hoofs grated on the road beneath the windows, and a post-chaise stopped before the door.

I heard a voice telling the postilion to stop.

"Why, it is uncle!"

I started up breathless.

"James!" cried my aunt, with a scared look, "what can have brought him here?"

"O, I know, I know!" I exclaimed, "Horace must be with him—he has come to say good-bye, he has come to see me before he goes!"

I was rushing to the room door, when it opened, and my uncle stood before me, alone. I know not what wild thoughts whirled through my brain. I turned giddy. I saw his pale rigid face, and my heart stood still.

"Horace!" I gasped out. "He is dead!"

"My bairn! My bairn!"

"He is dead, and you have kept me from him!" My own voice sounded hoarse and strange in my own ears.

"Margaret! My beloved child! Be strong, be brave."

"Tell me the truth. He is mine. I have a right to know. Is he dead?"

I clutched my uncle's arm. At the touch of my hand, his locked mouth broke from its fixed lines, with the terrible convulsion that comes upon a strong man when he weeps.

"No, Margaret, he is not dead. But he is gone—fled—fled away with Anna—and he is a damned black villain!"

The boom of the sea grew into a great roar, thick darkness came over me, and I fell down senseless.

ICE-BOUND IN ARKANSAS.

A QUARTER of a century ago a D.D. of Harvard College left Boston, Massachusetts, on a professional tour of inspection to the Indian territory lying to the north of Texas. The journey of about two thousand miles was made with the average number of delays, in the way of boiler explosions and break-downs. The doctor spent five months in passing from wigwam to wigwam, helped by a young Cherokee, whom, together with an Indian boy (not Titania's), he took with him in the month of February on the eastward journey back to Boston. Travel was not in those days very easy; but the presence of a wise man from the East was an event in the Cherokee world; and, on his return, the benevolent Bostonian was charged with the escort of somebody's wife and family to the Mississippi, and of somebody else's two daughters all the way to Boston, where they were to have their education finished.

Well, they set out, and in a week got to Van Buren: a small town near the western border of Arkansas, and a few miles below Fort Smith on the Arkansas River. Thence they meant to go by water across the State. But at Van Buren the doctor learned, to his dismay, that, owing to the low state of the river, navigation had been suspended for eight months. Until the breaking up of the frost in the cold upper regions of the Arkansas River and its long tributaries, there could be no boat-communication with the Mississippi. The detention of his caravan caused great concern to the excellent D.D. Arkansas was the resort for the lawless and the abandoned. Its inhabitants, harder than their more southern neighbours, the Texans, had all their reckless daring, without their refining influences. Moreover, the little town of Van Buren was specially favoured by a horde of border ruffians, whom the doctor, with his Indian boy, his Cherokee, and his two commission groups of girls, thought to escape by establishing himself and them in a farm-house a few miles from the town.

This farm-house might be taken as a sample of the planters' dwellings in that region. It was built of rough logs, and was divided into two compartments, in which the whole family cooked, and lived, and slept. In those days many such farmers or "planters" in Arkansas, possessing eighty or a hundred slaves, lived contentedly thus housed, and passed their lives in smoking, drinking, gambling,

hunting; while their wives and daughters sat in lazy ignorance, despising occupation as fit only for negroes, and having no higher ambition than to get the gaudiest show of trumpery in all the State upon their backs.

In such a family the doctor and his young friends were desired to make themselves at home; the farmer encouraging them with the usual declaration that he had plenty of "hog and hominy" to give them. It was agreed that all the ladies and children should occupy one room, and that the host, the parson, and the boys should live in the other.

These points were settled, and the united families were at supper, when a party of eight or ten men trooped into the house. These were already in possession of quarters. They occupied a sort of loft under the roof, the way to which was by a ladder through a hole in the rough plank ceiling of the lower rooms. The men of this party professed to be traders—chiefly in horses, but also in furs, skins, and general barter—with the Indians. A more daring, cut-throat, rough-and-ready set of men the discomfited D.D. had never seen together. Their leader was almost a dwarf; his legs were bent, and he carried his crooked arms with the elbows out, the shoulders humped, and his head buried between them. He squinted, and the sedate doctor never knew towards whom his evil glances were directed. He had a villanous look, and carried a long sharp butchery-sort of compound dagger, knife, and pike. It was a recreation of his to draw this instrument from its sheath and brandish it with a swagger, as if to warn off spies and intruders. Divers kinds of fire-arms were secured in his belt, and he seemed to carry a deadly instrument in every pocket: to load or sharpen some of which was the occupation of his quiet moments. Among his companions were men of various ages and sizes, all powerfully armed, to not one of whom did the doctor feel disposed to volunteer a remark. This repulsive set, nevertheless, watched their leader's face, and adapted themselves to him with that submission which is always yielded to a strong will. Their conversation soon convinced him that he had not gained much by avoiding Van Buren. On behalf of the young girls under his charge, he was uncertain what to do; but he resolved to keep unobtrusive watch over the movements of these gentlemen without appearing to do so, and to be very cautious in his behaviour. Exclusiveness was impossible. The host, himself a coarse rough man, recognised no distinction in his guests.

The dwarf and his comrades in the loft drank and gamed nearly all that night. As the hours dragged on, their conversation became loud and offensive. Through the loose planks the doctor heard them shamelessly boasting of their evil deeds, heard them name travellers whom they had swindled, and the fresh victims for whom their bait was laid. He heard himself and his party talked over with calculating curiosity, the voices sometimes growing louder and sometimes sinking into a whisper.

Though a brave man, he quaked a little in his blanket. Want of light alone compelled them to put an end to their riotous game.

Next morning, to the D.D.'s relief, these men set off for town, where they remained all day, coming back only in time for supper; then, with a general understanding, they betook themselves to the further end of the long table upon which the supper was laid, and there they talked among themselves, wholly busy on their own affairs.

There was a small church within a few miles, where, on the Sabbath following, there was to be "preaching:" a rather rare event in those parts. "A very smart man" was "due," the doctor was informed. This smart man appeared to be very popular in the district—"quite an orator," the squire assured the learned Bostonian. Orator or not, and popular though he might be, it appeared that the greater novelty—in the person of a D.D. from enlightened Boston—proved the stronger attraction to the inhabitants; for, when it became known that Dr. B. was in the neighbourhood, a deputation arrived on the Sunday morning to ask him to preach for them. Dr. B. was unwilling to take precedence of the orator who had brought his ready rhetoric from a considerable distance, so he only proposed to go back with the deputation to the church. When he got there, and was introduced to the divine of the backwoods, he saw clearly that he would run more risk of offending if he preached, than if he didn't. Nevertheless, the host took his refusal almost as a personal affront, feeling himself responsible to the disappointed citizens. In the craving for excitement, all the "gentry" for miles around had crowded to this little church, in vehicles as rough as the building, and drawn by quadrupeds almost as rough as themselves. The church, a mere log-hut, was crowded, and, to the doctor's surprise, he saw the dwarf and two or three of his companions occupying a bench in the middle of the room so called. After the usual exercises, the orator stood up to preach, and immediately the dwarf and his friends got up from their bench, and, without any attempt to hush their movements, hustled each other out of the building.

"I say, parson," broke forth the dwarf, from his end of the long supper-table, that same evening: "that was a regular sell of yours. Warn't it now? That little shanty never trapped such a shiny crowd as you seen there to-day, I guess. All regularly sold. He! he! Pity the Boston scholar couldn't find a word to say to any of them, neither."

The doctor then discovered that it was in the expectation of hearing him preach, that these men had gone to the church. He was not a little puzzled to know how to take their half-angry threat: "We shan't forget that sell, you know, parson."

Nearly three weeks went by. The frost that year had been so sharp in the upper country, that, notwithstanding the advance of spring, there was as yet no change in the river near Arkansas.

One day the household were disturbed by a singular murmuring noise in the air. It was a sound as of a long train of carriages upon a distant railroad, or as the far-off roaring of the wind in a forest at the coming of a tempest. But railroads were hundreds of miles away; the air was calm, the weather was fine. The whirling rushing sound of immense flocks of migratory birds on wing is sometimes heard a long way off, but now no dark cloud of feathery flocks was seen approaching. While the strangers listened and wondered, this strange murmuring grew into a roar, as of distant thunder. The doctor was considering what possible force in nature, what disturbing influences, could produce so sudden and astonishing an uproar, when one of the negroes laid his ear to the earth.

"Yor!" he cried, with a self-important air, as he suddenly sprang to his feet again. "Dat ar come down de ribber."

"The ice has then broken up!" exclaimed the doctor, and turned towards the river.

Accustomed as the Boston traveller had been to witness the breaking up of the frost and its effects on mighty rivers, he had never known it to be attended by so overpowering a tumult. It was now like a coming Niagara, and was accompanied by tremulous vibrations of the ground. The doctor hurried on; the river was not far off; and he had barely reached its banks ere he beheld, rolling, pouring, tumbling, forward, in one solid wave, a perpendicular bank of waters, eighteen or twenty feet high. It was what one can imagine that wall of waters to have been, "on the right hand and on the left," through which the Israelites passed, excepting that this vast volume was moving onward between its wide banks with astounding force and speed—dark and dense with enormous blocks of ice, with crumbling masses of soil, with stems and roots of forest trees. The inhabitants had hardly time to contemplate this vast wave, ere it had gone by, leaving a murky, tumultuous torrent in its rear. Soon the ordinary rushing of the rapid river was all that was heard. In a few hours the wide high banks were full. In a few days the turbulent waters had calmed themselves into a navigable stream.

When the long-anticipated passage-boat arrived at Van Buren, so great was the eagerness of the concourse of travellers to secure berths, so crowded and heavily-laden was the steamer, that, for the comfort and safety of the girls under his charge, the doctor resolved to await a second steamer, and so to avoid the throng of impatient backwoods-men, and especially the company of his ruffianly fellow-lodgers, whose manners had become insufferably familiar.

At last the time came when he and his young friends might proceed merrily down the Arkansas River. All went smoothly enough during the first day's passage, but on the following morning, to their dismay, they beheld the obnoxious dwarf and his comrades, and the deck crowded with horses and mules for which they had been trafficking. They had come on board during

the night, at a small town where the boat had stopped, and with them a number of other passengers. There was no help for it. When the ungainly horse-dealer stepped boldly up to the D.D. and the young ladies, and, with a free and friendly air, held out his hand and cried, "Hullo, parson, how are ye?" all they could do was, again to make the best of it.

Traffic on the river having been suspended for so many months, it was to be expected that the stoppages were now frequent, the passengers in eager haste, and the steam on at high pressure. In that most reckless State of a reckless country, the danger was very great. At last, as Dr. B. had along anticipated, the boat struck violently upon a snag, careened, and stuck fast. The people and horses rolled, plunging and struggling across the deck. Many who could swim, leaped straightway into the river. To those who could not thus save themselves, death seemed inevitable; for even if the boilers escaped explosion, the boat must—every one thought—go down.

When the D.D. could extricate himself and recover his feet, he sought his young companions, assisting and consoling them as best he could. With all speed the cargo was being pitched overboard to lighten the boat, rickety skiffs were being lowered, and, amidst the utmost confusion, the strong hustled the weak in their efforts to crowd into them, thus seeming to risk more certain destruction than if they took their chance on deck. The doctor was a poor swimmer, and in the scramble he had hurt one of his arms.

In that moment of deliberation the young Cherokee pressed eagerly towards the doctor. He could swim—easily, swiftly, he said. He would bear first one and then another to the shore. Young Neosho also could swim skillfully. Let the mother trust a child to him, let them both plunge into the river together, and, between them, all their friends might be rescued.

The doctor entreated the Indian youths not to take to the water till the latest moment. Meanwhile, he unloosed from his waist a leathern belt, in which was a considerable sum of gold. Should the coin drag him down to the bottom of the river, neither he nor it could benefit anybody, but if he could manage to fling it as far as the nearer bank, some survivor, or perchance some lucky emigrant, might find it, and turn it to good account. Wide as the river was, he could but make the attempt. Quick as the thought he doubled and redoubled the belt, and was tying it with his handkerchief to make the better throw, when the dwarf, who had watched his proceedings, pushed forward and confronted him. Even at such a moment, the doctor felt convinced that this man was about to demand the belt, and that he would not scruple to enforce his demand with one of those terrible weapons of his. Desirous that the robber should not have this additional crime on his conscience, the doctor hauded it to him without a word.

"Ay, ay! that's right, parson. *I* know the worth of gold," cried the dwarf, jerking out his words with great rapidity, and laying his hand upon the treasure. "No, no; not *this* trash," shaking the belt—"this is the nugget I mean," pointing unpleasantly, and with a grim smile, at the doctor's left side. "I don't profess to be of much account myself; but I can tell them that is, as quick as most. That was a regular sell of yours, though, parson. Warn't it, now?"

With his ugly head on one side as he spoke, and with first one eye and then the other leering upon the amazed minister, his motions were as rapid and as jerky as his speech. He spun about on his crooked legs, and poked and patted with his crooked fingers, first at the belt and then at the owner, and brought his crooked arms into as many unexpected positions as a mountebank: which, indeed, he strongly resembled.

The Boston doctor involuntarily drew back a step or two, though still holding out the belt.

"Ha ha! Afraid of me, eh?" cried the man, with a scornful laugh, though a shadow, as of pain, shot across his face. "Lookee here, now, parson!" Seeing that the minister was at a loss to comprehend his intentions, he proceeded in the same eager and emphatic manner, in his uncouth phraseology, seasoned with coarse compliments, to assure the doctor that he had observed him closely during their acquaintance at the squire's, and that he had come to the conclusion that "the parson's life must be saved, anyhow." That for his part, he was used to these "smash-ups," and could take care of himself when the time came; but the D.D. could not, and therefore he was to lose no more time, but choose a horse, strap himself upon its back, and trust himself to be carried safe to land. "Keep your money, parson," he added; "a few hundred dollars ain't nothing to me. I'm a rich man, though I ain't much to look at."

What with the number of persons who were leaving the boat, and the quantity of cargo which was being pitched overboard, the steamer grew perceptibly lighter. The violence of the current was also helping gradually to shift it from the branches of the snag. While the astonished minister was thanking his strange well-wisher, and explaining that he had resolved not to separate himself from the helpless young persons relying on his protection, and while the dwarf was urging upon the doctor any number of horses, and further volunteering his advice and assistance, the boat suddenly righted. Some minutes elapsed before the crew could ascertain the precise nature of her injuries; but these, after a time, were found to be higher up the ship's side than her present water-line, and less serious than had been apprehended. The business of collecting the swimmers, recovering the sinking, readjusting the freight, and making cautiously for the next stopping-place, need not be here detailed, such descriptions being as common as the accident.

When some degree of order and of con-

fidence was restored, Dr. B. looked round for his singular friend, with the intention of expressing a more thorough acknowledgment of his generosity, and also with a feeling of awakened interest in the singular character, which, though boastfully reprobate, had displayed such unexpected disinterestedness. But it was some time before the doctor caught sight of his friend, and even then he failed to attract his attention. The man seemed to slink away, as if with an uneasy sense of having done something to be ashamed of; so the minister had to seek on even to waylay, his fellow-traveller.

"Ay, ay, parson!" said the dwarf, with a mixture of hurt pride and bashfulness, when at length the Bostonian succeeded in drawing him into conversation; "now you'll never believe I meant you should have them horses! But to prove it, you shall come and choose one—two, if you have a use for 'em. I ain't much to brag on myself, and I don't, as a general thing, put much faith in parsons; but when I meets with a parson as is the right sort, I'd like to serve him a good turn, and I don't want to have him think I ain't capable of doing such. I did reckon on hearing you speak a few words, though, parson, that time as I went up to that ere shanty, and it *was* a sell of your'n, parson. Warn't it, now?"

SIR ALAIN'S DOVE.

SIR ALAIN has a castle fair,
There all his ancestors were born,
And there he drew his earliest breath
Beside the blue Elorn.

Sir Alain there keeps fendal state,
Fair horses, hawks, and hounds has he,
And he is great and he is good
As ever a knight may be.

He has a broad and open brow,
A piercing dark-lash'd eye of blue;
About his ruddy mouth his beard
Grows thick of red-brown hue.

And thick about his comely face
His wavy locks fall all adown,
Here burnish'd with a sunbright tinge,
Here of a shady brown.

Six feet two does he stand erect,
Great of girth is his spreading chest;
It had need to be, for a greater heart
Can beat in no man's breast.

Further down, by the blue Elorn,
'Neath the Château of La Forêt
(La Forêt, that in days of old,
So do the legends say,

Was Tristram's castle of Joyeuse Garde,
Where with the beauteous Isulte he
Received the flower of Arthur's court,
The glory of chevalrie)—

'Neath the Château of La Forêt,
Spanning across a singing rill
That spills itself in the fair Elorn,
Stands a quiet little mill.

An only child the Miller has,
She looks a damsel of high degree,
White, and tender, and calm, and fair,
With prison'd sunbeams among the hair
That ripples unto her knee.

Jeanne has suitors, a dozen or more;
Late and early they come to woo,
But cold is her eye, and cold her lip,
Unchanging her cheek's soft hue.

"Now, Jeanne, my daughter," the Miller says,
As he draws his child unto his knee,
"What is it turns thy heart away
From the best hearts offer'd thee?"

"What seekest thou, darling daughter of mine?
What manner of man should thy husband be?
Seekest thou learning, or beauty, or wealth,
Or seekest thou high degree?"

"Learning maketh the young man old,
Beauty's deceitful and fadeth fast,
Wealth I hold not in high esteem,
Though longer its joys may last;

"And high degree, though it sits so fair
On the brows of those unto honour born,
Is not for us, the tillers of earth,
The growers and grinders of corn."

Jeanne look'd up in her father's face,
Sweet were her eyes and very meek,
"None of these things, my father dear,
Does thy darling daughter seek.

"Art thou weary, my father dear,
To have me sitting here by thy knee?
Is the home where we both were born
Grown too narrow for thee and me?"

"If it be not so, O father mine,
And thou lovest the child my mother left
To be a link between her and thee
When of her thou wert bereft,

"Leave this talk that I hate to hear,
Bid these wooers in peace depart;
They are nothing to me; they can find no key
To open the door of my heart."

She has stolen along the wooded bank
By a path her footsteps alone have made;
The roebuck only lifts his head
And looks at her unafraid:

The little birds in their secret nests
Never tremble to see her pass,
And the wood anemones nod and smile
Amid the lush green grass.

At length she reaches an ancient oak,
Gnarl'd, and knotted, and half decay'd
'Twas said that beneath that very oak
The wily serpent maid

Brought from the lake unto Arthur's court
By Arthur's guest, King Pellenoire,
With glamour had won over Merlin sage,
To betray the hidden store

Of marvellous treasures, rich and rare,
Kept behind the enchanted stone,
'Neath which she made the enchanter pass,
Then left him to die alone).

Lithe and active as squirrel she climbs,
Where wreathing boughs make a leafy nest,
And there she sits without motion or sound
Save the heaving of her breast.

For soon 'mid the parted brushwood comes
A footstep—well she knoweth the sound!—
And through the covert Sir Alain breaks
With his favourite hawk and hound.

All unknowing the maiden fear,
He stretches his limbs on the grass so sweet,
The gentle bird on his finger rests,
The hound lies down at his feet.

Softly he strokes the gentle bird,
Softly the jealous hound draws nigh
For a touch of his master's hand, bestow'd
Between a smile and a sigh.

"Oh," then murmurs the Miller's maid,
And her cheek with a passionate pain grows pale,
"Must my heart starve with this hunger of love?
Is my anguish of no avail?"

"O summer air that whispers around!
O flowers laden with odours sweet!
O little birds whose tender wings
Flutter about my retreat!

"Have ye no voices to murmur low—
Low in his ear what I must not breathe—
'Love, love, love, is around thee,
Here, in the forest, love hath found thee,
Love that is stronger than death?"

"What am I saying, O master, mine?
What is the love of thy slave to thee?
Thou to care for a villein-maid
When no lady of thy degree

"Thou hast found worthy to share thy home,
Be the joy and love of thy life,
Noble, but noblest of all in this—
That she call'd herself thy wife.

"Could I be loved as that taméd hawk,
Even loved as the less-loved hound,
I were content to live and die
Couch'd at thy feet on the ground."

Little Sir Alain ever knows
What bird sits there on the great oak limb;
Or, as he rises and wanders on,
Whose heart goes after him.

And now through all the Breton land
Goes a stir and a rumour of war,
And Bretons, turning from spade and plough,
Are arming near and far.

For Charles de Blois, the invader, comes,
Marching on in the power of might;
Jean de Montfort stands his ground,
Sure of the power of right.

Sir Alain he leads a gallant band—
True men and brave as the land can boast,
Men with hearts, and hands, and nerves
To stand against a host.

Staunch to the call of liberty,
The sturdy Miller forsakes his mill;
He grinds his broadsword instead of grain,
And the busy wheel stands still.

"Now God thee save, my darling child,
And keep thee safe till I come again."
She clung to his breast, and no word she spake,
But the tears fell down like rain.

"Nay, my daughter, but weep not thus;
Wouldst thou weaken thy father's heart?
Wipe these tears and smile on me,
My darling, before we part!"

She wiped her tears, and she smiled on him.

"Think no more, my father, of me ;
Follow Sir Alain, as still my prayers
Will follow him and thee."

The host went forth to the battle-field,
The maid remain'd in the still old house ;
She went not forth to the forest by day,
Nor hid among the boughs.

She shed no tear, she made no moan,
She shunned the sun and the face of day ;
But when the moonbeams shone cold and white,
And the screech-owl shriek'd through the solemn
night,

Then she was up and away—
Away to the banks of the blue Elorn,
Away to the sleeping forest-glades,
Up and down like a restless ghost
Among the ghostly shades.

"For oh, I love him!" was all her cry,
"Oh, I love him!"—below her breath.
"He never could have been mine in life,
But his life shall be mine in death.

"Here on this spot I saw him last,
Here in the sunlight I saw him lie ;
And on this spot I'll lay me down,
And in the moonlight die."

White 'neath the moon is the sweet dead face,
Wet and cold lie the dew on her breast,
Wild on the wind the wolf's howl comes,
But nought disturbs her rest.

And in the morning a milk-white Dove
Rises up from the clay-cold form,
And wings its flight through the forest boughs,
Through the sunshine bright and warm.

Straight to the battle-field it hies,
Hovering high o'er the bloody strife,
Where Breton hands and hearts strike true
For liberty and life.

Sir Alain heads an onward charge,
On like a thunder-bolt he rushes ;
A French lance strikes his stalwart breast,
And out the hot blood gushes :

To and fro he sways—then prone
The grand form like a tower tumbles ;
Still borne on by the force of the charge,
O'er their leader each soldier stumbles.

They are past and gone : alone he lies,
From his breast the life-blood welling ;
Surely the sound of an angel's wings
There comes on the thick air swelling ?

No, it is but a milk-white Dove ;
She settles down on the gaping wound,
Pressing, pressing, her snowy breast
On the bloody gash profound,

Pressing, pressing, her spotless breast
Till the welling blood has ceased to flow
(The feathers take not the crimson dyes).
Sir Alain opens his death-dimmed eyes,
And murmurs faint and low.

Slowly his senses come again,
He sees the white Dove on his breast ;
He strokes it feebly, "Bird of peace,
Strange is thy place of rest!"

Anon across the field there come
The sturdy Miller and other three,
"The blessed Virgin and Saint Méen !
Behold the Saint-Esprit!"

The white Dove slowly lifts herself ;
They bind the wound and gently bear
The knight to shelter, and still the Dove
Hovers aloft in air.

They lay him down 'neath a gnarled oak,
Like that which grew at La Forêt ;
The white Dove, like the Miller's maid,
Sits up there all the day ;

The livelong day and the livelong night,
The while the Miller and his men
With careful tendance bring their lord
Back to the world again.

The fight is over, the battle won,
Armorica once more is free,
Sir Alain saved, and all again
Is as 'twas wont to be.

But never more the milk-white Dove
Was seen of any mortal eye,
Since from the oak-bough she had sprung
Up towards the summer sky.

HOUSE-HUNTING.

NEWLY called to the Bar, about to attend the Home Circuit, and on the point of marrying, I wanted a neat cottage (two sitting-rooms and, say, five bedrooms) about an hour's journey from London.

A love of good scenery made me select Berkshire or Surrey. I wanted (being an inexperienced dreamer) a little Paradise, semi-detached, with small Eden of flowers and vegetables, for forty pounds a year, exclusive of taxes—or inclusive, if I were lucky enough. Afraid of the dearness of things in the charming and well-known villages on the Thames, I went to the chief London house-agents, Messrs. Tyler, Meddleham, and Trap, and obtained their lists of eligible houses. What a bright dream-land lay before me! I stood like Columbus on the edge of a boundless and golden continent—deer-parks, pineries, lakes, conservatories, butler's pantries, hard and soft water, loose boxes, coach-houses, grouse shooting over forty thousand acres, were all before me where to choose. I had only to dip my hand in the lucky bag and draw a prize.

That sour fellow Fungoid, at the Sarcophagus, had told me it was a most difficult thing to get a cheap cottage that was worth occupying, if the neighbourhood were a popular one. Stuff and spite of Fungoid's—all said to vex me and Lizzie. What did he know about it, with his legs always on a sofa at the Sarcophagus, dozing over a blue-book on the game laws? Large mansions might be hard to get; but the "cottage orny" (as the house-agent called it when expatiating to me) was quite another thing. Here they were on the lists by dozens. "Very elegant semi-detached villa residence, at Little Bookham—good fishing;" "Cottage, with six bedrooms—gas—good garden;" "Delightful residence, at Cheatham—five minutes from railway station." Plentiful, indeed! Is sand plentiful on the sea-shore? Are buds plentiful about the first of May?

As I am not much of a business man, my future mother-in-law insisted on writing me down a list of questions—a catechism for landlords. They were not complimentary to my judgment, but they were still essential, as Mrs. Masterman pithily observed. They ran somewhat in this way:

“Rent?

Number of rooms?

If a store-room?

Mind the coal-cellar.

Ask what taxes.

Look at the gas.

Try the bells.

Feel all the walls.

Stamp on the floors to see if they are strong for dancing.

Make a note of the wall-papers.

Who are your neighbours?

Turn on the water.

Look at the kitchen grate.

Is the house dangerous for robbers? (Bad grammar, Mrs. Masterman.)

How long since occupied last?

When built?

If lumber-room?

Go on the roof.

Look down the chimneys.

See if the wine-cellar is damp.

Observe fastenings.

Measure all the rooms.

Ask rent of neighbouring houses.

Price of meat, poultry, and fish.

Price of wages?

Size of hall?

Number of stairs?

If main drainage?”

“Why, Mrs. Masterman,” I remarked, “it would take a surveyor a week, to answer all these questions.”

“Edward,” said that august and terrible personage, laying down her cards (we were playing whist at the time), “if you love Lizzie, and if you love me, you will not neglect a single question.”

The first house I went to was one at Perddleton—extraordinarily cheap—about twenty miles from Swindon and eighty from London. I started very early from London, dozed in the train, awoke in the fresh chilly air of early May, and found myself gliding on among the cold green fields of Berkshire, and not far from Perddleton.

We sprang through a tunnel, and were there. I asked the station-master if there were any house to be let in Perddleton?

“Well, sir,” said he, oracularly, “there was a week or two ago. Here, Jim” (he called a porter who was cleaning lamps), “Captain Jones is going to stay, after all, isn’t he, at Place Farm?”

“I think he is,” said the porter; “but Mr. Harvey will tell the gentleman. He’s the draper, sir, opposite the Berkshire Yeoman—every one knows him, he’ll know—straight up the hill, sir. Leave your bag, sir?”

Up the hill I went; a long dull hill, with a

villa here and there, and looking back, I had a broad distant sort of view of a fine valley and wooded hills. The scenery was featureless, but not restricted, and it might have been worse. I felt prepared to like it. I looked at “the houses, and the village church, and the cottage by the brook,” in that sort of friendly way that one does when making an acquaintance of a place that is to be one’s future home.

I found the main street narrow and dull, one, two, or three mean shops, several cottages, and two inns. I went first to the Berkshire Yeoman, and asked for Mr. Harvey. They pointed me out a dreary-looking shop opposite, with two pairs of boots and a red comforter in the window. Mr. Harvey was a hearty red-faced man, like a farmer. I asked for the house I had heard of at Perddleton. He proved to be its agent. “There it is!” said he, with a rueful look. He stood at the door of the shop, and pointed in a melancholy way to a cottage opposite; a long low-browed cottage, with a little green door, three stone steps, a small strip of turf, a low box-hedge, and a wall between it and the road. A more forlorn and sorrowful house I never saw, and my heart sank within me, until it leaped up again on learning that the annual rent was only twenty-five pounds.

A sudden courage seized me. I would see the house. Its cheapness attracted me. It had the best garden in Perddleton. A doctor had once lived in it. There might be good points; its inconveniences might surely be borne with for the sake of its cheapness. But why was it so cheap? Are good things ever cheap? Perhaps it was cheap, merely because it was old-fashioned, in a dull and forsaken part of a retired Berkshire village, and opposite labourers’ cottages. The door jarred open. What a place! A dark-stoned paved hall, the paper in a white efflorescence with damp, and here and there stripped off in large dark shreds. The rooms, with low oppressive ceilings that weighed down upon me like a nightmare, small and badly-lighted rooms looking out on the dreary road and the unchangeable box-hedge. The drawing-room—a gaunt chamber, rather lighter, and, in a solemn old-fashioned way, more cheerful—had a broad lattice-window looking out on a great square garden and a paved walk, some steps, and a dismantled little terrace, where the dry stalk of a last year’s sunflower shook its withered head disconsolately, as if grown idiotic with a long-continued pressure of misfortune. The garden only wanted rows of white tallies as tombstones to complete its identity with a cemetery. A huge dead pear-tree faced the bedroom window. Even in the cold spring sunshine and full daylight, I could fancy ghosts in trailing and rustling sacques, pacing along that doom-stricken terrace; faces in powder and patch looking through the latticed panes, little ghostly fellows in cocked-hats running out from the doors, or being chidden from the windows. The gable ends bore the date 1710, and every odd nook and angle spoke of Anne and Marlborough.

"Now for the bedrooms, Mr. Harvey," I said, in desperation. I proceeded to carry out Mrs. Masterman's suggestions. I danced on floors, I essayed the dangerous and giddy passes of the roof, at the risk of my life, I looked down chimneys. The best bedroom was pretty well, and looked out on the garden; but the smaller ones were detestably sordid: a small wooden partition dividing one from another, the windows looking straight down on some mean and dirty cottages.

Could I see the attics? Up we went again, up a set of rickety unfinished stairs, with the light showing through them. These opened at once without a landing into a large tent-shaped room under the tiles, with a sloping roof, glimpses of light here and there, and a chattering overhead of ruffling starlings and impudent sparrows. An airy room it certainly was, for a hardy maid-of-all-work; perhaps rather a rheumatic room; but that could be remembered in the wages.

Once more in the shop, and Mr. Harvey, cheerful and lively behind his counter, I put to him several bold questions not to be swerved from. I held him down (metaphorically speaking) as I asked him. I fixed him with my glistering eye, like the ancient mariner.

"Why was so good a house," I propounded, "to be let so cheap? Was the drainage bad, or was there anything special against it?"

"Not a wink," said Mr. Harvey, after looking very hard for a minute at a knot on the floor, and making a vain attempt to whistle a popular tune to show indifference both to me and any question I could or would ask. "Not a wink; only the best dining-room looked out to the garden instead of on the street."

"Oh, that, I said, I preferred. Nothing else?"

"No, not a wink, except that the rooms were rather low, and some people liked 'em high. Old Mrs. Goldweight lived there seventeen year and died there."

I took a measurement of the rooms and left. When I got to London and told my solicitor, he said, "What? Perdleton? Why, the lawyer there is an agent of mine. I'll write to him."

He wrote. The answer knocked me down.

"Perdleton is not a healthy place. There is always typhoid fever in the low grounds, and the people are not remarkable for either honesty or morality."

Instantly my vision of the place turned coal black. I pictured processions of hearses up the long dull hill. I fancied that jovial wretch Harvey watching the doctor's daily visits at my door, until at last the blinds were drawn down slowly, and a low voice by my bedside said, "He is gone!"

But, in point of fact, Mrs. Masterman had long before sternly said, "Edward" (she had a way of tolling my name out), "Edward" (another tocsin), "I will never allow my child to be sacrificed in low rooms for the sake of a few paltry pounds."

Plangdon was the next place I visited. It is a market town in Berkshire, very accessible

from London—a large dirty place, with all the alleys and filth that it is possible to accumulate in a given number of centuries. A deep-sunken damp town, with pretty suburbs. I went to the chief house-agent's, opposite the market-place clock, and found a sporting sort of man nibbling a quill, and treating business in a contemptuous playful way.

"Were there any cottages near Plangdon to let?"

"John," said the sporting auctioneer to one of two giggling clerks, who seemed to be allowed to be impudent to every one but their master: "look and see what there is in the book. There's Laylock House, three hundred pounds; and Mrs. Bevan's place; and there's the Thompsons', fourteen bedrooms."

I cut the fellow in two at once. "What I want," I sternly remarked, "is a small cottage at about forty pounds a year, a mile from the station, small garden, five bedrooms."

This intelligence so disgusted the sporting auctioneer, that he looked at his gold hunting watch, lighted a cigar, and at once strolled into the town, leaving me to the two impertinent off-hand clerks and the great red insolent-looking reference-book.

"Yes. There was one small cottage, semi-detached, on the Maggleton-road, five bedrooms, small garden, fifty pound rent, had been ninety, but half the house was now cut off and turned into separate residence. Would I see it?"

This was really a nice place, "Havelock Villa," well built, plate-glass windows, good porch, good front door. The only drawback was, we could not get in. The workmen had gone. In vain we rattled the door, rang the bell, tried the windows, got on the back kitchen roof, looked down the chimney. No one being in the house, it was very natural that no one should answer. No one answered, and nothing could be done.

It would have required a stout heart to have daily splashed through that miserable rat-haunted town, threaded that vile suburb, and scrambled over rubbish-heaps, to that dark, unlighted, last street of Plangdon, to find one's wife and servants murdered, and the plate-box gone. Such a garden, too—a passage of rough turf, four lignum vitæ trees and a laurel.

Whish—h—h! Whish!

"Why, what's that?"

"That, zur?" said a native urchin. "That's the train to Manglebury."

I took a few steps and looked over the hedge. There was a deep railway cutting about twenty yards from the bedroom window. Trains all night. What a pleasant, retired, quiet residence; and Mrs. Masterman a bad sleeper too!

"Boy, what's the first train to London?" I exclaimed, indignantly, and shouldered my umbrella with fierce determination. I began to hate the petty miseries, the disappointed hope, the mirages, of house-hunting.

The only comfort I got from Mrs. Masterman was: "She could have told me at once that Plangdon would never do." Lizzy looked sorry.

My third pilgrimage was to a very different sort of place, Harrington. I got to that sombre Berkshire market-town, by a little branch railway from Brindleton. We ran down from the open country into a valley stretching downward to the Thames. The town consisted of four streets, of queer gable-ended pent-housed buildings, debouching in a market-place, the chief feature of which was the bow-window of a large inn. Beyond this the street ran straight to a huge pile of stone surrounded by acres of dim churchyard, thick set with head-stones.

The house was shown me by the parish clerk, for it belonged to the clergyman. The clerk was a small tradesman, stout, rubicund and smoothly respectable, deferential, and with a second-hand clerical manner, which was not exactly hypocritical, but looked rather like it. Again I saw the shuttered windows and dusty walls of a house to let; again the key opened a jarring and echoing tenement. A little quicker, and we should have come on revelling fairies or a sleeping Brownie. As it was, we saw nothing. It is hard to steal a march on fairies. The house had been a doctor's. There was not much to say against it at forty-five pounds a year. Good rooms—up and down, plenty of store-rooms, large cellar, great outhouses, disused coach-house, mouldy doors, detached wash-house; altogether, the place where a murder must have been, or certainly would be, committed; large dark yards, with one dim latticed-window looking on a paved court, every stone in it cracked across. The garden, a little damp enclosure, with gouty-jointed trees hung with cobwebs, was across the road, and open to every one who passed.

"That churchyard makes a very bad look-out, clerk," said I. "I should mope to death here."

"Sir, you know there's no burials now in the part opposite your windows."

"My windows? No. It won't do," I said, emphatically, to the bland clerk; "very dull, and no view. My compliments to Mr. Harker, say it's very nice, but doesn't quite suit me."

"Try Surrey, dear Ned," said Lizzie, on my return, as she stuck a lily of the valley in my button-hole, so constituting me her delighted and daring knight-errant for the day. "How cruel it is of ma making my poor Ned take all this trouble!"

"Stuff and nonsense," said Mrs. Masterman. "What *can* be more important, my dear, than the choice of a house? It would not be too much if Edward spent six weeks looking for a desirable residence. I am not going to let you inexperienced young creatures put up with any avoidable inconveniences. Edward, try Surrey. What do you say to Crayton or Northgate?"

To Northgate I went. Curious old town, with an up and down street, and a fine old Elizabethan palace at one end, out of whose gateway one almost expected to see old Doctor Donne emerge, or excellent Mr. Evelyn. The High-street seemed to end in a green field at one end, and a rifle drill-shed at the other. A river ran across Northgate, fine wooded hills

girded it in. One old church lay broadside on to the quaint High-street, and another gloomed down on it from a side opening, like a fortress built to command it in times when the citizens were factious and turbulent. Facing this there was an inn with plate-glass windows and an air of snug comfort that made the beef and ale most palatable.

The house-agent was a little chirpy red-faced man with a great deal of white hair, and an after-dinner manner of such intense chuckling enjoyment at his own importance and success, that he seemed longing every moment to burst into a laugh. His wife, a pleasant neatly-dressed old lady, with flying lilac ribbons, stood at the office door, in equal good nature, and with equal importance and bustle.

"Not a house to be had in Northgate; great demand; people coming from Crayton and snapping up everything; ain't they, Mrs. Dawkins?"

"To be sure they are, Mr. Dawkins."

"And land dear, and not to be had. Is it, Mrs. Dawkins?"

"Not a rod, Mr. Dawkins."

"But I'll see. Why, isn't there that house on the Nortyton-road? Old lady died only on Monday last, and next day they sent here to tell me to put the house up to let. Didn't they, Mrs. Dawkins?"

"To be sure they did, Mr. Dawkins."

Then the jolly old couple looked at each other, and laughed and chirped at the very thought of an old lady dying on Monday, and they having to put "To Let" up in the window the day after. I did not see the joke.

The house was a little trim building, one of a row of six, with a little garden in front, and a low wall of pierced stone-work. The front windows commanded a view—pleasant? Well, not so varied as it might have been—a huge square flat field planted with cow-cabbages. The back windows stared on a small parallelogram of garden, now a heap of rubbish. There was a little mean front room, and there was a handsome but dull drawing-room, and five or six little bins of bedrooms, like those you find at sea-side lodging-houses. I left dissatisfied.

I had only Crayton to visit. When a man goes house-hunting he is apt to become superstitious, and to look around him for auguries and omens of success or failure. He tries to discover whether the place he is visiting is or is not to be the place which Providence has chosen for his next halting-place in life's march. He tries to get the place into focus, and to consider whether such an outlook, such a road at the back, such neighbours, such an aspect, are supportable or insupportable. He looks at the gate, to see if it be the sort of gate at which he would like to make his exits and his entrances. He poses himself in the dining-room, behind an imaginary rank and file of decanters, and speculates if he could be witty or comfortable there—or both—or either—or neither? I had tried those mental pictures at Northgate, and they had come out damaged photographs. I had still to try them at Crayton.

I shot down there one morning—hour and a half from Waterloo Bridge. Pretty station, rolling hills quite alive with the passing shadows of clouds and glimpses of glancing sunshine. Higher on a huge knoll, a big mansion, like Aladdin's palace modernised; and deep down in a valley among these hills behind, intersecting green waves of trees, the town, dotted white here and there with villas and mosaicked on its edges with bright green meadows, and red-dotted groups of cattle, and whiter specks, which are sheep, and long dark lines of Scotch firs, and broken banks of rice-coloured sand. The Surrey hills, then, do really exist? I had always thought they were imaginings of London lodging-house keepers.

The town one long street, with grey hills for its horizon. Its pavement, a high terrace on one side; a stationer (also a druggist), a haberdasher, several inns, a tobacconist, and wine-merchant, its most noticeable tenants. The house-agents, two gentlemanly young red-whiskered men exactly alike, and their father, a pleasant rosy old man of a bygone age, portly and courteous. They told me of a cottage on the Downton-road, towards Oxberry-hill—five bedrooms, rent forty-five pounds, gas laid on, good supply of water, nice small garden, good repair. Would I see it? Their clerk would get the keys and show it me.

Off I went, and with good omens; sky blue, day pleasant. Lizzy, perhaps here is to be our nest. My dear Mrs. Masterman, perhaps I may even yet appease you. About half a mile's walk led us to the borders of Crayton. Past builders' yards, past small suburban shops, past gardens seen through grated doors, past schools with noise and chatter oozing from every window, past half country roadside inns, with sign, trough, and outside benches, then up side-roads encumbered with rubbish, and heaps and piles of bricks, and preparations for building more raw new houses, such as those that already lined half the road. Then a pretty lane, and a corner cottage, gable ended, Swiss as to its wood-work, with a pretty projecting porch, and a little high green platform of lawn. I liked the place at once; so bright, snug, and cheerful.

The smart boy from the auctioneer's reasoned with the lock for a moment, then threw open the front door. Yes, all good. Pretty hall, two cheerful rooms, with gay but not vulgar papers, handsome marble mantelpieces, high square rooms with plenty of window. Yes, there my bookcase could stand, there my chair, there Lizzy's little fantasies and piano. Yes, it would do. The bedrooms, too, were good, and commanded fine views of the hills. Excellent cellar, neat bath-room, useful kitchen. Only one blotch on the paper in the drawing-room dimmed its white and gold. What was that blotch?

A slight stoppage in the roof; spout where the snow last January had lodged and worked in. That should be at once put right—in "perfect repair," was what the landlord, Mr. Mosser, promised, and he was a man of his word. I think it was the lawn, after all, that

decided me; for, as Mrs. Masterman observes, I am so unpractical a man. There was a charming view from the lawn; a park across the lane, on one side; before it, the town and the hills.

So I took the house, and proud I was when Mrs. Masterman consented to come to stay six weeks with us, and when I led Lizzy into the house on our return from our honeymoon tour in Switzerland. We have been at Crayton now two months, and we like it. The second day we were there, the baker's man informed our servant, to our great delight, that a nightingale every year built in the ivy of the second elm from the lamp at the corner of our road—the lamp, in fact, that glimmers over the corner of our lawn. We have since had reason to doubt the baker; still the information gave us pleasure for the time, and there was no reason to doubt it until experience proved the contrary. But our greatest triumph was on the day of our arrival, when we first saw four brawny grey horses emerge from a cloud of dust and advance up the sandy lane facing our house, straining every sinew, and dragging after them the huge van stored with our furniture. Then Lizzy and I felt that we were housekeepers, and were launched into life. And so we were; and moreover we had Mrs. Masterman in attendance, to guard us, as she observed, "from a thousand deceptions." The chief feature of Crayton, for the first week, seemed to be the perpetual whirling of tradesmen's light carts to and from our door, and the incessant calling of butchers and bakers for orders. But we hope to live through all this, having Mrs. Masterman to take care of us. I like to be taken care of, and so does Lizzie. But perhaps six weeks is rather a long while to be taken care of, at one time.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XXIII. A REVELATION.

DURING these days it was noticed that Mr. Tilney took to visiting Mrs. Tillotson a good deal. Latterly, however, he had fallen into a habit of "dropping in" one night upon the captain, another night upon Mrs. Tillotson. With the captain, who always treated him as a guest of grandeur and his visit as an exceeding honour, he was welcomed with the familiar decanter of sherry. With Mrs. Tillotson the same ceremony was repeated; but with her he got into the habit of bemoaning himself in an arm-chair, with his face turned to the ceiling hopelessly. This dejection had reference chiefly to gathering money difficulties, and especially to what he called his "native home." "See me here," he said, "dishonoured, I may say, in my old age. I have no place to lay my grey hairs, that is, my head;" for he was conscious that the colour of his hair was brown. "They hunt me like a hare. They do indeed. The only thing I can compare it to is poor

what-d'ye-call-him, your father, whom they hunted to—By the way, where does Tillotson get *this*? Does he bottle himself?"

"My poor father," said she, sadly, "I begin now to look back to *him*. We turn back to those old friends again and again, though *that* was only a dream, and must ever remain so. It was God's will that I should be *so* young at that time."

"Only a dream, as you say, my dear, and far better it should stay so. Far better not, than have our pillow—yours and Tillotson's, I mean—full of thorns."

"O, what would I give," she said, with sudden eagerness, "to know the whole, no matter what pain or sorrow it brought with it. Latterly I have begun to turn back to that time, and something tells me I shall know all yet. In fact, I think I have got on the track."

Mr. Tilney started. "God bless me, don't, my dear child. Put it out of your head. There are good reasons why all these *old* things should be let to lie."

"I'll tell you," she said, stopping her work, and not heeding his expostulation. "I have been turning it over a great deal, and a thing has struck me. Promise me you will admit it."

"Nonsense, nonsense," said he, waving his hand half sadly.

"I suspect my husband has been told of it, and has been cautioned."

Mr. Tilney started. "No, no, my dear; put it out of your head. He knows no more than this—this glass of wine."

"But he does," said she, "and I'll tell you why. When we were travelling—now mark this—there was a little Italian town directly in our way on the coast—Spezia."

"Spezia!" said Mr. Tilney, looking at her amazed, and laying down his glass untasted—a sign of genuine astonishment. "Why, that's—How did you?"

"Ah! I know it," she went on. "We turned out of the road and avoided it. He wished to spare me. He has been cautioned."

"Upon my soul," said Mr. Tilney, looking round, "this is next to marvellous. Perhaps he does know something. Poor Dick Bateman knew everybody, and may have met *him*. Still we were all bound up, you know; and so you took a *détour*? How curious!"

"You know it all," she said, more excitedly. "If you could only imagine how it has taken hold, how it haunts me in dreams, how latterly a sort of unrest and craving has come upon me to have something to cling to in the weary hours that I have to pass through. Dearest father, as I always call you and have called you, do this one thing for me."

"Why not ask *him*, then?" said Mr. Tilney, in real trouble and agitation, flying for assistance to the comforting decanter beside him, "since he knows? though, indeed, my poor child, why should your little life be troubled, when an old wreck like me can give you a little comfort? After all, we are not to keep you a child *all* the days of your life; and really, now, we are so snug here, and so comfortable, that

I don't see why—There was a little money, as you know, my dear; and I, as you know, my dear, was clothed with a sort of trust. But I have been so run from post to pillar—so hunted about, like the commonest hare—that literally, my dear, I was *obliged*—"

She stopped him. "You must never talk of that, dear papa," she said, gently. "It was quite right; for it was all yours—*all*. Had you not been at the cost of taking care of *me* for so many years? Never speak of it; but tell me about these letters, and papa whom I never saw, but for whom I feel—O, such a yearning!"

Mr. Tilney was melted into an extraordinary power of melancholy retrospect.

"Dear me," he said, "I remember the whole so well, as if it were only last night, and yet it is how many years ago now?"

"And you saw him, and knew him?" she asked, eagerly. "I always thought that your goodness to me was a mere accident—that some friend—"

"Don't let us call it accident," said Mr. Tilney, lifting his eyes devotionally. "Nothing is accident—not even the sparrow on the house-top! In a certain sense, I did *not* know him—hardly. But indeed the time is ripe, my dear, when you should know something of this. Do you know, I feel a pang at having kept it from you so long. I was travelling at that time with poor Dick Bateman, now gone. Before that, indeed, he broke hopelessly—horse and foot; but at that time he was really as nice a fellow to know as you wish for. He was on the Dook's staff, too, and I picked him up at Venice, or some such place; so we agreed to travel home together. Same chaise, and that sort of thing. And, coming home, I recollect very well our stopping at one of those little Italian towns. Bateman, dear, was as fine-hearted and romantic a fellow as you'd ask to see. Well, we dined at the inn—a very fair dinner indeed, and uncommon good wine, and sat out in the garden drinking it; and while we sat there a gentlemanly looking man, a little decayed and broken up though, came out to one of the little tables and had his bottle of wine there. He had been a handsome fellow in his days, but was rather gone about the cheeks here, and he sat there taking his wine until it got towards ten o'clock. I think he was listening to us talking, for we were in high spirits. When, as we were getting up to go away, he came over and stopped Bateman, and, in good English, asked to speak to him for a moment. Now, if poor Dick had a horror of anything in this world, or in the next, it was of your gentlemanly seedy Englishman, so he drew himself up a little dryly. 'I used to know you,' said the Englishman—'I knew you well only a few years ago, Mr. Bateman, and you will know me when I tell you my name.' 'What,' said the other, starting back and recollecting him, 'You? Augustus Millwood? What is this? What does all this mean?'"

"And this," said Mrs. Tillotson, her soft eyes fixed on the story-teller, "this was—"

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Tilney, now grown grave and rational, and really moderate in his applications to nature's kind restorer, "yes, it was indeed. A man I had often heard of—moving in the best—fine estate—money—everything; but run through it all. A common end, indeed. But Dicky Bateman was a true and noble fellow, and ~~many's~~ the time he's— He went aside with Millwood, and was away, I suppose, an hour, and then he came to my room just as I was turning in. He was full of excitement, my dear. I remember it all as if it was only last night. 'We must be ready to go on in the morning,' he said (we were to have stopped a couple of days), 'and I have ordered the chaise for six o'clock.' 'My goodness,' said I, 'I am dead beat. I thought we were to lie by here a little.' 'Well,' said he, 'the fact is, I have promised to see poor Millwood through—or Alvanly, as he calls himself here. Fact is, he has got into a row with a young Englishman, somehow, at the tables at Monaco, and they have come on here to settle it. He has been infamously treated—forced into it—and is as low as if he was going to be hung. I shall see him through, Tilney.' Then he told me a good deal about this poor Millwood, or Alvanly, as he was called there; that he had been treated cruelly on all sides, and that he had not a relation in the wide world to be kind to him or look after him; that his wife, for whom he had a deep affection, had died two or three years before, and with her death he had thrown off all restraint. But he had with him a little girl, only a couple of years old, whom he had been obliged to leave at home with a hired nurse, and her future was the thing pressing upon his mind. He told Dicky Bateman that he had just a couple of thousand left out of all his fortune, and that he was getting through that as speedily as he could, and so that perhaps this interruption was the best thing that could happen. I never saw any one so affected as poor Dicky was with the whole business, and he sat up half the night with his friend arranging everything, and promised him to look after the child, and take care of it, and he got me to promise also to help him. You, my dear, were that little child, at that time far away in England."

Mrs. Tillotson listened, with the devotional eyes bent upon the ground. Then she said, "Dearest father, why did you not tell me all this before?"

"Well, I must finish," said Mr. Tilney, hastily, "for, my dear child, you may guess what I am coming to, and, indeed, there is no use dwelling on it, for it has been hinted to you often before, dear. It was a very sad and cruel business. I was up the next morning, and we had the chaise ready, and I waited in it on the post-road with the trunks ready on, and the postboys in the saddle. I remember it was a lovely bright morning, and the sea was as blue as a turquoise brooch, and glistened like silver, and I was looking down at the coast, when I saw Dicky running to the chaise

for his bare life. He got in. 'Drive on,' said he, 'for your lives. Two crowns each more. My God,' said Dicky, throwing himself in, 'it's all over! What a thing to have on one's soul!' My dear," said Mr. Tilney, with unusual gentleness and a tenderness that had nothing to do with sherry, "now you see why it was as well I never went into this matter. It was no use. Now, now. Don't—don't go on so," added he, soothingly. "You know yourself you were only a child in arms at the time."

"But such a cruel, cruel end," sobbed Ada. "O, my poor, poor father! To think of his dying in that miserable duel."

There was a silence for a few moments. "It spoiled our tour," continued Mr. Tilney; "begad it did; for poor Dicky took it immensely to heart. We posted on as hard as we could go, and he told me the whole business as we went along. Poor Dicky, he felt it very much; for he said the others were savages, and were determined to have the man's life, and tried again and again. Then, when we got home, he made *you* out, my dear, and I must say looked after you like a father until he died, which was in a couple of years, and then I promised poor Dick Bateman, on his death, that I would take his place. And so I did, my dear. And there you have the whole story. And there, in your hands, are the last letters he wrote. And there, my dear, is the little picture. Now, now, don't—"

Ada was weeping convulsively. "My poor, poor father," she said. "And this was his wretched end, and I never to know all this time. Never to have an opportunity of praying God to execute justice on his murderers."

CHAPTER XXIV. A DISCOVERY.

At home that day there was, therefore, a deeper gloom and oppression. The wretched meal dragged through oppressively. Mr. Tillotson scarcely spoke, said he was unwell, and, when the dinner was over, went to his study. With a growing sadness, which was tinged with wonder and wounded pride, Mrs. Tillotson sat up-stairs alone.

Ever since the visit of Mr. Tilney, the strange story he had told her had been the subject of all her reveries, and distracted her from greater troubles. She could hardly bring herself to think over those dismal revelations, and yet in these solitary hours she found herself dwelling on them with a piteous retrospect and a strange yearning after the parent whom she had never known or seen, but whom every hour she was pining to have known. Often, too, she sat with a little packet of letters before her which Mr. Tilney had sent her, but which as yet she could not bring herself to read. For among them were those last letters of all written on that fatal night, and which she now shrank from. Often and often she had put off this duty, knowing what pain and sorrow it would bring her; and she every moment felt herself drawn nearer and nearer to it. One idea, however, began to take firm hold of her mind, and that was a sort of expiatory and filial pilgrimage

to the grave of her lost parent; and the more she thought of this, the more it soothed her. And finally she began to think over it with a soft pleasure and anticipation.

On this night, the letters were there before her, and at last, by a sort of uncontrollable impulse, she made up her mind to go through them. The very look of the first seemed to bring the little Italian town like a picture. She saw the cool evening after the sultry day, the retired garden and the strangers arriving in their chaise, and the poor outcast sitting there lonely by himself. The first she opened was a letter to herself: she kissed the faded characters. It was in a trembling hand. It ran:

"Rose of Italy.

"Time, three o'clock in the morning.

"I leave these few lines, which I hope my friend will take care of, and see that they be given to my little girl Ada when she grows up, and shall have come of age. I write knowing well that I am doomed; but I would wish that she should never know my miserable end until then, as I would not wish her sweet childhood to be troubled by any gloom. Tell her that her father died of fever, plague, anything. Any end will do for so unlucky and wretched a life as mine has been.

"At this moment, my dear sweet Ada, you are sleeping in your little cot, not thinking of what is coming on your wretched father. Perhaps it is all for the best, and I may as well end this way as another. If I was to live longer, I should only bring disgrace on you, my child, and rob you of the little fortune that is left. Thank God, I have not touched *that*, though it has cost me some hard struggles and temptations. It was a great agony to part with you, and if I had stayed by you, my sweet child, all this would never have happened. God, God bless you, if such a being as I am may invoke a blessing on so pure a creature."

Her tears fell fast as she read. There were others, one to his friend Bateman. It began:

"I feel I am a doomed man. That wicked truculent savage is determined to have my blood, and he has worked that youth up to fury. And yet as I sit here, for my last night, I declare to you, guilty as I have been all my life, I am innocent of this; I never spoke to that lady in my life. The truth is, I won some money from them at the tables, and the elder has been in a fury ever since. The young man is, I think, half mad with rage and jealousy, and they have followed me on here, hunting me like a dog or a hare. I confess to you I was anxious to avoid them, not from fear, as they imagine, but because I have a presentiment that as they were determined to have my blood, I knew they would succeed. I *did* fly in the night, and now they have overtaken me, and I feel my death-warrant. But O, Bateman, my poor sweet little girl. What is to become of *her*? I have not a friend in the world; they have all left me because they think I have disgraced them. And yet I have only been unfortunate. O, what

is to become of her, unless you, and after you other friends, look to her? *That* is what disturbs me in these last moments. Otherwise I should be resigned, and let those two bloodhounds have my life any way they pleased. I do not expect fair play, for I hear they have sworn to have my life, and they are welcome to it; for the youth fancies my death will be the best news he can take back and recommend himself.

"And now one more thing, Bateman. When the time comes for my sweet Ada knowing this miserable story, see that she learns the true state of things; let her not associate any vile history of disgrace and shame with her father's name. I here protest that all my life I have been more sinned against than sinning; that I have been the victim of enemies and of my own weakness; and that now in this last act I am helpless and powerless, and driven to what I cannot avoid. Heaven, I hope, will accept it as a little expiation for errors."

She wept long in silence over this paper. Then she turned to another which was in a different hand. This was dated from a Paris hotel, and after some months. It ran:

"In obedience to the wishes of my poor friend Millwood, I now set down here for his daughter to read, when she comes of age, what happened on that morning.

"I had learned from the innkeeper that he had arrived there much exhausted about noon of that day, and that about eight o'clock the same evening a chaise had come up with two gentlemen, who had followed him into the garden, where a dreadful scene had taken place. The two were very wild and excited, and one had even threatened to shoot him on the spot. I arrived myself shortly after, and was astonished to find an old friend in such a condition. Then he told me his position—that these two desperate men had entangled him in this quarrel about a Frenchwoman, whom he had scarcely spoken to in his life, whose advances, indeed, he had rejected, and who had set the younger of the two to avenge the slight.

"The two were literally beside themselves with fury; the younger, in a sort of fever with rage and dissipation; the elder, from some old grudge about money against Millwood. They were disappointed at his finding a friend there, for I think they hoped to have had their victim all to themselves, with no one to interfere. But I took a very firm tone with them.

"At five in the morning they met on the seashore. I had great difficulties in keeping up the spirits of my friend, who continued saying that he was doomed. His last words were, 'Don't forget my poor little Ada;' and his last act was to hand me the enclosed letter for her. The two were very eager to begin, and it was agreed that they should throw for the first fire. We gained it. 'Courage,' I whispered to him; 'this is a great chance for us. On this depends everything, so be steady.' But his hand shook. 'I see my poor little girl,' he said,

as he took the tools, 'and I feel that I have behaved like a coward in abandoning her. Mind, mind,' he added, in a despairing whisper, '*mind*, I rely on you, Bateman.' The word was then given. He fired, and to my satisfaction I saw that his adversary was hit on the elbow. He gave a cry of rage. I stepped forward, and said that now the matter could not, or need not, go further. But the older man swore it should, and the young man, all bleeding as he was, stamped and said, unless I stood away, he would fire there and then. On that Millwood came himself, said he was ready, and, folding his arms, went back to his place, and waited calmly. 'Don't forget,' he said to me, 'I have but a moment more to live.' The young man, whose hand trembled with pain, now called out, and his friend said to him in a low voice, 'If you miss him now, by Heaven, I won't miss you.' 'Ah!' said the other, 'I have him;' and he fired. The ball struck him in the centre of the forehead, and Millwood fell like a stone."

The letter dropped from her fingers. For many minutes she sat there sobbing, and without venturing to pick it up, and finish the dismal story. It was, in fact, already finished. There was no more to read, and she sat with her heart turning towards that little Italian town where her unhappy father had met with such an end.

Suddenly a voice disturbed her. She raised her eyes, still filled with tears, and saw before her Mr. Tillotson, looking at her steadily, and with a letter in his hand. "Tears," he said. "What are you suffering from now? More oppression? Perhaps some of *my* work? I am sorry to disturb you," he went on, "but here is a letter just arrived for you. Heaven knows, I have no wish to be tyrannical, or to restrain you in any of your desires; but I have a duty to myself and to you. I have said again and again that I do not wish any communication with your friend, this Ross. I have even commanded this, so far as I have the power. You set me at defiance."

"I do not," she answered. "But what does all this mean? I am weary of it. I have no wish but what you wish. Why do you accuse me in this way? What is this change that has come over you?"

"No wish but what I wish?" he repeated, indignantly. "And you say that to me—you that make appointments with this man and his friends, and take his part against your husband. No wish but mine?" he repeated, bitterly. "No, no. At least, let us have no shams."

The colour came into her cheeks. "I grieve for this," she said. "I am sorry. I didn't think you would have stooped to set spies on me. I see you have lost all trust, love, and confidence in me. Well, perhaps it is for the best."

"I lost! No. Don't think that I am ignorant of what is going on, or of what has been going on. I am not the poor, soft, weak, plighted fool that I have been taken for; and I shall take care to show it yet. Perhaps I am changed; but who has changed me? What

has changed me? There, take your letter. Do as you please. Write to him. Defy your husband."

Suddenly she ran towards him. "Dearest husband," she said, "this is some delusion. Some wicked people have been filling your mind with these wild suspicions. Shut them out. Dismiss them. You know me. As for poor Ross, it is only for him I am anxious. We are only anxious that he should go away, and if we could see some opening—"

"I dare say," said Mr. Tillotson, sadly. "Nothing more suitable."

A sudden idea came to Mrs. Tillotson. "Or," she said, "you would not object to this. I see that you have taken up some strange ideas about me and my conduct, which no argument can dispel. It is useless reasoning. What if I went away? I want to travel. Then after a time—a few months—you would take a juster view of me and my conduct."

"And where would you wish to go, if I might ask?"

"I have thought of that, and settled it. I should like to go again to Italy—to that town on the coast which we passed by—Spezia."

He started back and turned pale. "To Spezia! What do you mean?"

"I may not tell you now," she said; "but I have good reasons. If you recollect, we avoided it on our travels. But it is a duty I have too long delayed."

"This to me!" he cried, sinking—"this from you!" "O Ada, then it is too true. Go, then. Carry out your schemes; ruin, disgrace us. I shall make no resistance." She thought he would have fallen from his chair, so ghastly did he look. But in a moment he rose, and rushed away from the room.

"What does all this mean?" she said, distractedly. "What is going to happen? O Heaven, look down on me! What are these dark insinuations? I seem to be in a dream. It is in vain to argue or resist. God help me!" She saw the old letters lying at her feet, and half mechanically she took them up, half mechanically she let her eyes fall on the part where she had left off. She read on:

"If ever there was murder done on this earth, it was by these two men. God forgive them! His blood is on their heads, and calls to Heaven for vengeance. Slowly and surely may it track them. If I am doing wrong, I am accountable; but there can be no sin in praying that earthly retribution may overtake that ruffian Eastwood—"

"Eastwood!" she almost shrieked; but she read on:

"—And his wicked companions in guilt."

Her faithful maid coming up that night had found her in a swoon. The household, who, with the instinct of households, knew pretty well what was going on of late, set this down as but a development of the new state of things—that "not getting on," which had arisen between master and missus; but it must have

gone very far indeed that night; and looking at the open letter in her hand, it was set down as being "all along" of that Ross.

After that night a yet deeper shadow settled on the Tillotson house. It seemed to others as though some deep blow had fallen on Mrs. Tillotson, which had crushed her, though they could guess what it was. But from that evening from Mr. Tillotson she seemed to shrink away with a sort of terror. He himself could hardly understand this change, for she now made no protest, and accepted all his wishes with a dreamy submission. Still, she did not forget that one purpose, which had come upon her in the night like a sort of inspiration, to get Ross away—anywhere; even implore of him to go. At the first opportunity she set out for the captain's residence

CHAPTER XXV. THE CAPTAIN HELPS.

As usual, the captain was overpowered with the honour of a visit from a lady. "Well, well; and give me the hand again. My God! And to be caught in this way. I'm ashamed of myself. Just like an old woman—nothing ready. See, my dear. Sit yourself down there—not on *that* one—it's got as bad a leg as myself. But I mean to make a job of it—a regular job, you know—some day next week. And did you walk here—now, now—you must—;" and the captain's fingers were on his little keys, and he was on the march towards the "guard-her-vine." There was a large official document before him, to which he saw her eyes wander. "Ah! There's what they've sent me now! They've found out I've been drawin' full allowances long enough, and want to get a little work out of me. It is a shame, and it makes me blush sometimes, when there's many a poor struggling fellow overrun with children—the creature who ought to have it, instead of a lazy, good-for-nothing bosthover like—However," said the captain, with some pride, "this is from the War Office—no less. They are going to put some of the Royal Veteran Battalion and the pensioners to garrison some of the little coast forts in Ireland. Gad, I remember them well. The martellos. I think," said the captain, with a sort of wistful doubt, "I could do something in that way. Guard-mounting once in a morning. Ah, but, after all, what can they do with an old foos-terer like me, who can't stand straight on his two legs? Now, my dear, enough about old Tom and his concerns. How's Tillotson?"

Then, with much hesitation, she began to tell him what she had come for. The captain interrupted her at once.

"I sec," he said. "The very thing. God bless me! What sense ladies have. They can buy and sell the whole of us. Now, give me the hand for that. I am really very much obliged to you for coming to me in this way; I am indeed. I'll just sit down this very day and make a pen, and write a line to General Cameron, my old friend—that's to say, when he was then Colonel Cameron—as fine a soldier as ever

stepped. He'll do it; and if he can't, we have other irons in the fire, dear. There's Colonel Wombell, at the Horse Guards. So make your mind easy, we'll take care of Master Ross."

"Dearest captain, how kind, how good you are!"

"No. But I am obliged to you for coming to me. It's an obligation; and nowlet us leave that, or look on it as good as settled and done, and tell me how you go on yourself. I am afraid, do you know (you might mind, my dear, an old boy like me that could be your grandfather, and proud I'd be if I was!), but I have not an interest in you both, that you won't mind *me*, I know. Now, I declare it quite grieves me to see what's going on, you and he as nice a pair as ever was put together, and born to be happy; and if I could be the least use in the world, God knows I'd put these old eyes upon sticks to make things square." She hung down her head.

"It is no use. It is hopeless. Nothing could be done. He is possessed by some strange delusion about me, and besides, I myself—No, dearest captain, I see it is all quite hopeless. Nothing can be done. It must all go on as it has gone on."

"But surely, my dear," said the captain, wistfully, "a word in season might set all straight; and if I now—"

She shook her head. "It cannot be. You do not know all, nor dare I tell you all. I only want to see some end or issue of these scenes. But I suppose I must only bear all."

The captain wondered to hear this language. "I am an old Bolshero," said he, "and will be so till they come to measure me for the old chest. But I have known Tillotson so long and so well, I'd stake my salvation there's a mistake between ye of some kind. There is, I know. There never was a finer, or a better, or a nobler creature on the face of this earth. He likes you only too well, my dear, and trust an old boy who has seen a little life, it's all jealousy."

"It is not that," she said, hurriedly, and rising to go, "there is more than that—enough to make us wretched for the rest of our life. But we must try and bear our lot. As for you, dearest captain, how shall I ever thank you for this goodness?" And the golden-haired lady faded out of the room, leaving the captain in a litter of wonder.

With great form and ceremony he got out his great writing-desk bound with brass, opened it with equal ceremony, drew a special sheet of paper, and finally selected a quill pen, which he proceeded to "make;" then he got into his dressing-gown, and bending painfully down, with the "spectacles" on, began his despatch:

"My dear General." "My dear General," he had to repeat to himself a great many times over, in a sort of hearty, friendly way, as if the general was then sitting before him. "My dear General, I know you have not forgotten your old brother-officer, whose name is at foot, and his mess days of the old Fiftieth. I hope, my dear general, you are well and flourishing, and that everything is going straight with you. I have not forgotten

all your old kindness to me, and never shall, please God. You were always a true friend, and therefore I am ashamed to say what I am going to say, which is in the nature of begging; but the extremity of the case must be my sole excuse."

(The captain was greatly pleased with this turn, which he read aloud several times. "The extremity of the case must be my sole excuse.")

"That will do uncommonly well," he said. "Now to the point."

"There is a young man, my dear general, whom we are all anxious to get out of the way here, for *particular reasons*; no man's enemy but his own, and disturbing the peace of domestic families."

(Again was the captain pleased with this new turn, and read it aloud—"Domestic families.") "We want to send him away for fear of dangers that may ensue. And if you, my dear general, have any little berth up the country that would suit a wild young fellow, but a fine soldier-like looking man, I cannot say how you would oblige your old friend, Tom Diamond."

After writing several copies of this document, and after many consultations of a little Johnson's Dictionary, but carefully and with a pardonable pride retaining that fortunate phrase, "the necessity of the case must be my *sole excuse*," a fair copy was at last produced, folded, sealed, and directed, with all formality, "His Excellency General the Right Hon. Sir George Cameron, K.C.B., K.H.," and putting on his best frock, the captain went out to the military club to find out the proper address. To his surprise, he found that General Cameron was actually home on leave from his government, and would be in town in a few days. All letters were to be kept for him there.

"Look here, sir," said the gentleman who was framed in a window, and who was attracted by the captain's deference and simple manners, "here's lots of 'em already. The general lives here, I may say, when he's in town. He'll have this in his 'and the first thing, you may depend on it, sir."

With all this the shadows deepened slowly and surely in the Tillotson house. Every day the distance seemed to widen between the husband and wife. At times, he would see her eyes, those soft eyes, fixed on him with a strange dread that seemed to him like repugnance, and which he resented bitterly—with scorn. He brooded more and more over his wrongs, and set down this new phase of things as a defiance, with which she was determined to carry out her own views. Strange gusts of grief and passion swept over him, and which changed as suddenly into a fierce truculent manner, which she accepted with indifference or resignation. He was growing more and more indifferent to his bank and its concerns every day. He would absent himself for days; and when he came, would arrive late, and then start away suddenly, as if to keep an appoint-

ment. To say the truth, no protest was made against this behaviour. The great Lackson was taking a stranger interest in the concerns of the bank every day, and often told him, "My dear friend, you don't take half care of yourself. I don't like your looks at all. Don't mind working *us*. Spare yourself, and when you are well, then you'll do duty for us!"

Gradually, therefore, the great Lackson was becoming an influence in the bank. He had lost all his taciturnity, and, under his inspiration, its operations were beginning to show something like vitality, and getting out of the old "snail pace," or financial jog-trot.

One thing, and one thing alone, had possession of Mr. Tillotson's mind—a jealous, a mortally jealous watch on the proceedings of his wife. "If love is gone," he thought, "then I shall have respect, at least. That old dream is gone for ever. But he shall not profit by it."

And in these gloomy meditations he would sit for hours shut up in his study watching every step up-stairs. When the carriage came round, he would go up and ask to know where she was going; and she, with that look of shrinking from him and half averted, would tell him without concealment.

CHAPTER XXVI. AT THE MATINÉE.

In these days, about a week later, Mr. Tillotson was sitting in his room, when a ring came to the door. Presently he heard a voice in the hall, which his quick ear knew at once.

"Not in," it said—"Mrs. Tillotson not in! Don't tell me that at this hour of the day. Go up and tell her at once, and I'll sit in the drawing-room."

The servant repeated firmly that she was not in, and that he was sorry that he could not allow any one up-stairs.

"O, you have received instructions, have you?" said Ross. "You have got your orders. What if I wait in the hall here? I can do that if I choose. Supposing your mistress sent for me here this morning on business, eh? Come, I know as well as I am alive that she's up in her room. Don't tell me. And your master, pray? Gone to his bank, I hope. Is it he that has given these orders? It does not make so much difference. One place is as good as another to see a person. One house is as good as another. Well, tell your mistress, when she comes in, that she should make no appointments. I am not to be sent about from post to pillar in this way."

Thus this strange being rambled on in the hall. Mr. Tillotson listened in his study, and heard every word, biting his nails to the quick.

That day Mrs. Tillotson's carriage was at the door. As she was going out, the pale face of her husband appeared at the study door.

"Would you come in here a moment?" he said.

She obeyed, with the old shrinking and averted eyes.

"I shall not detain you," he said; "don't be afraid. I wish to speak about what I have

so often spoken to you before. I cannot have this going on, unless—unless you wish to turn me mad. I have said, again and again, Ross shall not come here, and that you are not to see him.”

“And do I see him?” she asked, coldly.

“Do you,” he repeated, “do you make appointments with him? No matter. That all must end now. Or if you choose to defy me openly, and do what you wish yourself, it would be more honourable and straightforward to tell me so plainly. Otherwise, it will be my duty to watch you—to have you watched narrowly—and see that my wishes are carried out.”

She coloured, and her eyes flashed.

“Since you have lost all confidence in me, I decline to say what I shall do. As you have announced that I am to be spied on, I scorn to justify myself. The whole is a mystery to me. I did indeed think that, after all, your old love, which endured so much, would have endured such a thing as this. But it is better we should understand each other, I feel myself innocent, and shall take no pains to satisfy unjust suspicions.”

She left the room, and entered her carriage, leaving him in a torrent of grief, wonder, and stupefaction. But in a moment he had roused himself.

“I accept what she proposes,” he said. “I have been a dupe once; she shall not find me one again. And after her cruel treachery, too!”

Mrs. Tillotson drove away. As she was passing through one of the quieter squares, she saw a walking-stick waving at her eagerly, and recognised Mr. Tilney, very bright and got up in a showy morning dress. She stopped, and he came to the window.

“So glad to have met you,” he said, leaning his arms on the window, with his stick soldier-wise across his chest as if it was a shield.

“So like a Providence, you know. But these things are all in the hollow of his hand—not a sparrow, you know. You must come, positively, and it’s a charity, too.”

“What is it, dear father?” she said, quite accustomed to this elliptical style of communication.

“Just close by here—two doors off, I may say. Amelia Bellman, quite a lady, only reduced to give lessons, I remember long ago at the palace, as nice a woman as you could pick out of the street—any street. A Miss Clifford—Ida Clifford—was just in the same—a charming thing, only it was broken up. When the Dook, you know—But I will come. A charity. She has taught the girls, and they are bringing young McKerchier and the others. Just take two tickets and drop in for half an hour. Do us a charity. A poor girl is quite desponding; for, to tell you the truth, the tickets have not gone off yet, and the rooms in advance before the doors opened; so, positively, unless we can put together our seven and sixpences, the whole thing will become very awkward indeed—for me, indeed.”

Mrs. Tillotson had her purse out in a moment. She never could refuse Mr. Tilney’s requests. Besides, she was fond of music. She opened the door and he got in. They drove aside of the square—round—and were set down at the concert-room’s door. A modest little placard, in red letters, announced “MISS AMELIA BELLMAN’S MATINÉE, under distinguished patronage.” But there was no crush. A few dropped in. Miss Bellman gave lessons to a few genteel people about Mr. Tilney’s neighbourhood, and indeed there was more gentility than skill in her teaching. Herbesthal, a fair London pianist, had promised to play a couple of pieces, and Miss Shulbrick, the well-known contralto, to sing. Still her little hall was a hopeless and desponding sight. The audience were so scattered it depressed the hearts of the pianist and contralto. The Tilneys had all come, and Mr. McKerchier, who yawned without concealment through the performance, and pronounced the whole thing “the greatest rot going;” though, at the same time, it is a fact that he did not discharge his little liability for the ticket, which fell upon the Tilney family. Miss Bellman’s papa, an ancient singing-master of repute, but long since turned out into a paddock, had put on harness again for his daughter’s benefit, and consented to give *The Death of Nelson*, after the declamatory model of the late Mr. Braham. This old gentleman accompanied himself, and turning his back on his piano, leaned over confidentially to the audience, to tell the story of the great naval engagement as if over the side of a vessel. Although it was very long, the scanty audience—out of pity and sympathy for the unhappy *beneficiaire*—stayed out the whole programme with surprising endurance. The pianist gave a couple of little “things” of his own.

The Grasshopper, Op. 6. . . . } *Herbesthal*.
Iceicles }

Wonderful little bits of piano pantomime, where the trained ear could distinctly hear chirruping, and where, in the second piece, long sustained notes like a bell were intended to convey the idea of the cold “monotonous” icicle—and after this the audience rose to go.

It was late and had grown dark. Mrs. Tillotson had sat with her friends, listless and absent. This was not the music for *her*. Once, indeed, at Mr. Bellman’s blinking eyes, and face stretched away from his piano, as he told of England’s generous admission that every man on that day had done his “*dee-yewty*,” she could not forbear smiling. As the lamps were “turned down,” and Miss Shulbrick was singing the *Children’s Grave*, somewhere down towards her waist-buckle, Mrs. Tillotson, sinking back in her seat with a sigh of weariness, heard a whisper at her ear. There were several empty benches behind her, and a gentleman had just come in and placed himself close to her. She turned round with a start.

“Why do you persecute me in this way?” she said, agitated. “Go away, I entreat. You are bringing ruin and misery upon me.”

"This is a public concert," he said, coolly, "is it not? I have given my seven and sixpence to Miss Bellman. Bring ruin on you! no, not for worlds, Ada; not for my own life. Bring ruin on you—who shall do that? Who shall cause you a moment's trouble of mind? Tell me, and if any one dares——"

She grew alarmed, and looked round eagerly.

The concert was now ending. It was raining, and the audience, at last released, hurried away. Ross came out with Mrs. Tillotson, still pouring his incoherent words into her ear. She was only thinking of how she could most speedily get to her carriage.

"Take my arm," said Ross, "d'ye hear? I'll see you to your carriage. What, are you afraid? I don't care who sees us. Come!"

They were nearly alone, as the company had all but gone. Suddenly a hand was laid on Ross's arm, and Mr. Tillotson's worn and weary face, with eyes that gleamed with a slow fire, was between them. He did not speak to Ross.

"You will come with me," he said to her; and with some roughness, at least with quickness, he drew her away.

His arm trembled. Ross's cheeks blazed up with fury.

"All this is the ruin and misery which you spoke of. This is our tyrant, it seems. For shame to treat—a lady—a girl—in that way! You set up to give lessons in chivalry and amiability."

"I don't wish to speak to you," said Mr. Tillotson, white as a sheet. "Do not come in my way, I warn you. Come!" he said, almost fiercely, to Mrs. Tillotson.

"Yes, let us go," she said, hurriedly.

"This is brutal," said Ross, stepping in front of them. "How dare you treat that gentle creature this way? I have a mind to give you a lesson here on this very spot. So this is your new game—tyranny over a helpless girl, who is now victimised to you for her life." Ross was working himself into a fury. "I tell you, let me once hear that you dare say a rude word to her, or give her a moment's trouble or discomfort, or attempt to play the tyrant, by (an oath) half an hour after, I'll come to the house and make you answer it!"

Mr. Tillotson's answer was a look of deep, hopeless reproach to his wife.

"This from you!" he said. Then turned to Ross. "This is too great an outrage. I have borne too much from you. But I give you one warning; if you attempt to interfere, by word or look, with me or any one belonging to me, if you dare to come near my house, or to address

a single word to her or to me again, as sure as I live you shall repent it—just as I made you repent it one night down at St. Alans!"

Mrs. Tillotson wrung her hands bitterly. "O, how is all this to end?" she cried.

Ross could not answer for a moment. He was half stupefied. "Ah, you threaten me with that!" he cried. "Don't think it for a moment. I am your master; I have but to lift up my finger and I can make you tremble, and your miserable soul quake within you! I tell you again, I watch over *her*, and shall watch over and protect her against your tyranny. Listen, one whisper. Come here." And he drew Mr. Tillotson over to the wall. He put his hand up to cover his own mouth and whispered, then drew back with a smile of triumph. Mr. Tillotson shrunk from him with a start of terror; his pale face had become yet more ashy pale.

"Shall I?" repeated Ross, with a tone of triumph. "Shall I *now*? Now mind, you have had warning. Let me hear but of a single word to *her*, a look, a gesture, and I shan't spare you. Ah, ah, my friend Tillotson, that was an indiscreet allusion of yours to that St. Alans night. So mind, you have had fair warning. And, Ada, now you have a protector at last."

Neither husband nor wife, both crushed and overpowered, could say a word. The miserable Tillotson stood there against the wall.

The keeper of the rooms came now to warn them that it was time to "shut up." Ross was gone, and Mr. and Mrs. Tillotson went out mechanically to their carriage. He put her in. With a sudden impulse Ada, looking at his hopeless face, said almost despairingly, "Don't mind this, don't think of it; I do not mind him in the least, or his threats. I will explain all to you now. Come!"

But he shook his head, and with compressed lips said:

"No. It is all over *now*." Then shut the door and turned away.

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IN SIX WEEKLY PORTIONS. FIFTH PORTION.

CHAPTER XI.

AT nineteen, life is very vigorous within us. Let the soul be harrowed and the mind tortured as they may, the body will yet struggle to throw off its load of suffering. My youth and strength asserted themselves, and physical illness was not added to the anguish of my heart's sorrow. It was otherwise with my aunt. Her frail tenure of life was sorely weakened by the shock, and we watched at her bedside with a dumb foreboding. Anxiety for her, and the necessity of attending on her, took me out of myself. The sharp present pain sometimes dulled that other heartache for a moment. But there were hours when my wounded love awoke and cried within me with an exceeding bitter cry; and the moaning voice of the vast eternal sea seemed but the echo of my little human woe. At first I could not speak of it. I could not think of it. I could only feel it. But by degrees I lost the overpowering sensation of terror that possessed me at the first agonising aspect of my grief, and slowly dared to look it in the face. For three days after my uncle's arrival, I was as one in a dream. Mechanically I went about my daily duties, and said no word, and asked no question. Mr. Norcliffe was constantly in the house, fulfilling the duties of a physician and friend with unobtrusive kindness; I think it was by his advice that they left me to myself, and forbore to speak until I should be prepared to hear. At last, as I have said, I took courage to look my trouble in the face, and I resolved to know all they could tell me. "I will hear it at once," I said, "and then——"

And then?——

I could see nothing beyond. The long vista of my future years, had held one figure journeying by my side. No matter through what trials we still should walk together. That had been my dream of life.

"Uncle," I said one night when the household were preparing to go to rest, and my aunt had fallen into a heavy slumber after a restless day, "will you come out with me on the beach for a little while? Aunt is asleep, and the servant

shall stay in her room till I come back. I want to speak to you, and I feel as if I should be stifled in the house. Will you come?" He pressed my hand in his, took up his hat, and silently we went down-stairs. A short flight of rough stone steps led down from the terrace on which the house stood, to the shore, and, once upon the wide beach, we were in absolute solitude. It was a warm dark night, with phosphorescent gleams upon the water. The soft wind, blowing seaward from the land, brought with it sweet wafts of country odours. Slowly, slowly, and in silence, we paced onward, until a turn in the shore showed us a distant light-house blinking with its red eyes far into the night.

"Dear uncle, I want you to tell me——"

"To tell you, my dear bairn?" For I had stopped and stood silent with my hand upon his arm.

"To tell me all about——Horace and my sister. I will only ask you this once, and then it will be over."

"I am glad you have spoken, Madge. It would have been my feeling to have had it all out before now. But others thought differently, and perhaps they were right."

"Yes, uncle; quite right. And—and—I want to beg one thing of you." He took my trembling hand and held it in a firm though gentle clasp. "I want you to try not to say things like—like——"

"What things, my darling?"

"Such as you said that night of Horace. I know what you must feel; but O, dear uncle, I beseech of you not to say hard things of Horace to me." I was sobbing with my head upon his breast.

"How shall I speak the truth and not say hard things of him?" returned my uncle, bitterly.

"But there, there, my beloved child. Heaven knows I would not willingly add to your burden. I will do my best, Madge."

Then, brokenly and with difficulty, he told me what he knew about my sister's flight. "I suspected nothing," he said, "nothing in the world. It must have begun when they were so much together at Meadow Leas. He seemed moody, and did not spend so much time as formerly at the Gable House. At least, not with my knowledge. God knows what went on behind my back. Anna had full liberty, and, as for him, he was like a son of the house."

By degrees, I heard all that he could tell me. They had not left Willborough together. Horace had started by the night-coach for his northern destination, and Anna must have met him at some preconceived point upon the road. She was not missed for some time, having given out to the servants that she was going to spend a few days with the Gibsons at Meadow Leas. Neither my uncle nor I had the heart to follow all the windings of the scheme. A few hours after he had missed her, and had begun to feel uneasy at her absence, he received a hurried letter in Anna's hand, saying that any attempt at pursuit would be worse than useless, as before those lines could reach Willborough she and he would have crossed the Scottish Border, and got married. "I was half crazed," said my uncle. "As to sitting still at home, I could no more have done it than I could have flown to Scotland, and seized the throat of you——; well, well, I won't say it, my lassie. But that's what I longed to do at first. When it fairly came home to me that it was too late, I just flung myself into a post-chaise to come to you and your aunt. Talk of a man's strength! Yes, if fighting be the cue. But for endurance: why, the bravest of us is fain to lean on you frail creatures when Sorrow comes and sits herself down in the ingle-nook."

In all that my uncle said and left unsaid, I could trace the deep wound that Anna had given to his proud affection. He had loved her so. He had so gloried in her beauty and her high spirit, and even in her untamed vehement temper. He loved me fondly, and felt for me. No sympathy could have been deeper, more tender, more unflinching than his. But, for himself, the bitter smart was this: that her hand should have dealt the blow. That she should be false, treacherous, ungrateful! His pet, his bonny bairn, his darling! Strive as he would to throw the blame on Horace, there was a rankling sense of her unworthiness that wrung his kind heart cruelly, cruelly. Never again, on the rare occasions when my sister's name was mentioned between us, did I hear him speak of her by the familiar appellation of her childhood. It was "your sister," or "Mrs. Lee," or "Anna." Never Nan, or Nanny. Never, never, again.

When Uncle Gough had ceased speaking, there was a long silence between us. At last I rose (we had been sitting on a heap of loose stones) and took his arm. "Thank you, uncle," I said. "You are very good to me."

"Good to thee, my precious bairn!" All his full heart gushed out in a burst of tears and inarticulate ejaculations. He took me in his arms, as if I had been indeed the bairn he called me, and wailed over me as a mother over her sick child. We wept together until the passion had spent itself, and something like peace came down upon our souls. And, as we walked slowly homeward, the first glimpse of that, "*and then*," began to dawn upon me.

What if, though the bright glory of my morn-

ing were quenched for ever, there still remained long twilight hours to turn to account, ere the night cometh when no man can work! I was still very weak, very heart-sick, very miserable; but there was already a faint ray of comfort in the thought that I might yet be dear and useful to others.

When we reached home, the servant of the house was standing at the door looking for us, and she ran forward to say that her mistress was with my aunt, and that some one had been despatched for the doctor, as Mrs. Gough was awake, and seemed "mortal bad." We were with her immediately, and Mr. Norcliffe arrived soon after; but the first glimpse of her face told me, inexperienced though I was, that human skill was powerless to prolong her life. She died peacefully in my uncle's arms that night.

CHAPTER XII.

WE went back to the old house, Uncle Gough and I, to the quaint old house at Willborough, taking the shadow of our sorrow and our loss with us. I pass by the first pain of looking on the familiar scenes and faces with our changed eyes; I pass by the grief of the servants, the condolences of friends, the sympathy of humble neighbours. As my uncle had said, now that Sorrow had sat herself down in our ingle-nook, it was to me that he looked for consolation. He was a man peculiarly sensitive to a woman's influence, and peculiarly needing a woman's sympathy. Soft and unassuming as his wife's character had been, he had leaned on her for support in the every-day affairs of life, and had turned, in any trouble, to the never-failing solace of her wifely love. Now, she was dead, and Anna was gone, and Horace, whom he had loved so well, was cast out for ever from his home and from his heart, and there was no one but I left to fill the vacant places. What a sad autumn was that which followed our return to the Gable House! The summer had waned before we left Beachington, and my uncle and I used to wander arm in arm along the garden paths and through the shrubbery, ankle deep in fallen leaves. He seldom cared to pass the iron gates into Willborough, and few strangers crossed our threshold. But, once, old Mr. Lee came. He came one sunny afternoon, soon after our return home. I, sitting sewing by the window in the morning-room, heard the gate bell ring, and looked out to see who the unwonted visitor might be. I stood up trembling, and my work dropped upon the floor.

"Margaret, what is it?" asked my uncle, looking at my scared face; then, following the direction of my glance, he, too, saw Mr. Lee, who was now almost at the porch.

"I can't bear to see him, uncle. What shall I do? Let me go away."

"Yes, child," said my uncle, with his brow knitted into the stern troubled look it often wore now. "Go, dear. He shall not disturb you. Why does he come here at all? It was a bitter hour when any of his name first darkened these doors."

I hurried away up-stairs, my knees shaking under me, and shut myself into my own room. There I stayed for above an hour, sitting motionless and dry-eyed on the bed, with a dull sick feeling at my heart. At last Hester came up-stairs and knocked at my door.

"Your uncle's love, Miss, and do you feel well enough to come and give him his tea?"

Then I knew that Mr. Lee was gone, and I arose and went down to my uncle. He said not a word at the time about his visitor; but I learned afterwards that the interview had been a stormy one. Mr. Lee, while deprecating the conduct of his son, had tried to act as mediator between Horace and my uncle, endeavouring to show that continued resentment on the part of the latter could only hurt himself, and was really uncalled for. That the thing was done and could not be undone—"which," said my uncle, "was the sting of the whole matter"—and so forth. But it finally appeared that his chief object in coming had been to ascertain whether Anna's marriage would make any difference in the amount of her prospective inheritance. My uncle had always announced that my sister and I were to be the joint inheritors of what property he had to leave, and that it would be divided equally between us.

"I told him," said my uncle, speaking of this to me afterwards: "I told him that neither your sister nor her husband would ever be the richer by one penny of my money. She and he have chosen their way, and must pursue it together. But never, with my consent, shall any help go from me to them, either during my life or after my death. I have one niece, one child, one heiress. He wanted to see you, feeling sure, he said, that *you* would not wish this. But I told him, if you were an angel I was none, and that in this matter I would have my own way. So he left me."

I tried, of course, to alter my uncle's resolution. What was the money to me? But whenever I reverted, even distantly, to the subject, he grew so fierce and terrible in his anger against her, that I was fain to cease my pleadings, and leave it to time to soften him more effectually than any poor words of mine could. So, the autumn and the winter and the spring wore away, and the summer came round again in its appointed course. Twice during the year Mr. Norcliffe had come to see us, and on his last visit had pained me by asking me to be his wife. Pained me, because my own trouble made me tender to the genuine feeling of an honest heart. And it could never, never be.

"I don't ask for love, Miss Sedley," he said. "I know and respect your feelings. But if you could ever bring yourself to think of me—if you could give me any hope that time might change your resolution—you would make me a very happy man."

I think I did not fully know what my love for Horace had been, nor fully realise how that part of my life was lost to me, until I received this proposal. My uncle would have

encouraged it; and Mr. Norcliffe was a man every way my superior, and I was very sensible of the great honour he did me when he placed this high confidence and trust in me. But all that was over. I assured him that my marrying was impossible, then and thereafter. He took it like the fine-natured gentleman he was. And the last words he said to me on that occasion were these:

"Miss Sedley, if you ever need a friend's advice, or a brother's protection, will you believe that I should esteem it my dearest privilege to afford you both? Will you tell me that you trust me enough to ask me for them?"

This I could most heartily and gratefully assure him. There had been several letters from Anna to my uncle, and there had been one directed in Horace's hand. But Uncle Gough thrust them all unopened into the fire, holding them firmly in the blaze until the last fragment was consumed. My heart yearned sometimes for news of my sister. I had been thinking, dreaming, musing on her, and on Horace, all the year; and, as my first anguish softened, I began to ask myself if this estrangement were to go on all through our lives. He had loved her best. Was she not more beautiful, more attractive, than I? I thought sometimes that if they had only come to me, and had only confessed that they loved each other, and had asked that I should release Horace from his promise, I could have done it.

One bright day I had persuaded my uncle to drive some miles out of town, to a small property he had in a neighbouring village, consisting of a few cottages and some pasture-land. One of his tenants had desired to see him on, I know not what, business connected with some trifling repairs. It would be a change, an occupation, an excuse for a short absence from home. I dreaded to see him entirely lose his once active habits, and sit dreaming in the house day after day. I urged him to drive over to the village, and, having seen him set off in his high gig with the old mare, fat and frolicsome after her long rest, I took advantage of his absence to go into Willborough and make some house-keeping purchases. I had almost completed my task, and was nearing the Gable House on my way back, when I remembered that cook had asked for some sweet herbs, and I went into a shop to get them. We all know how subtle and potent is a familiar odour to awaken sleeping memories in the brain, and the smell of that shop invariably took me back to the market-day when Anna had gaily thrust a fragrant bunch of herbs over my uncle's shoulder, and we had first seen Horace Lee. O me! How long, how long ago, it seemed!

The good woman who served me, put up what I wanted; and then, as I took the little parcel in my hand, she said:

"So we've got your sister back among us, Miss Sedley."

"My sister!"

I suppose my face turned very white, for I felt the blood rush back to my heart, and the

woman looked at me with a startled expression.

"Dear life, miss! I hope I haven't done wrong to mention it. I never thought but what you knew. Will you sit down a moment, miss?"

"No, no, thank you. But tell me—when did they—I mean how long—"

"How long they've been here?" said the woman, helping out my unfinished sentence. "Well, I'm not rightly sure, but it must be going on nigh a week. My master, he seen young Mr. Lee at Rotherwood's door last Thursday. They're staying there, I take it."

I thanked her and hurried out of the shop. As soon as I reached home, I shut myself into my room, and, without removing my hat and cloak, sat down to think. I should run the risk of meeting them, unprepared, at any moment. I knew too well that any idea of my uncle's admitting them beneath his roof, was hopeless as yet. But I did not think he would forbid me to see my sister. Did he know of her being there? I scarcely thought he could; he had so, resolutely set his face against all mention of her name by any one whomsoever. It behoved me to consider how I should act. Could I bear it? Could I see him as my sister's husband? How would they receive me if I went? I revolved all the aspects of the question without coming to any decision, when, on a sudden, my heart cried out: "She is your sister, she is the motherless companion of your infancy, she is the only living being of your blood you have to cling to. Go to her!" I listened to my heart's voice, and arose, and went forth upon the urging of that strong impulse. I hastened out at the iron gates, and took my way along the street to the house the woman had mentioned. Mr. Rotherwood's offices were on the ground floor, and (his dwelling-house being in another part of the town) the upper stories had been hitherto disused. But now, as I glanced at the windows, I saw white curtains there, and signs of habitation. I would not stop for a moment, nor slacken in my pace, lest I should turn coward and go back without fulfilling my purpose. I reached the private door, almost breathless with my speed, and, having knocked, was admitted by a little country servant, who stared at me with all her round eyes.

"Is—your mistress—within?"

Only at the moment of asking the question, did I remember that I must now speak of Anna as Mrs. Horace Lee. With strange unaccountable inconsistency, I, who was coming there to heal the past, and offer reconciliation, could not make that smaller effort of calling my sister by his name!

"Yes," said the girl, with her wondering eyes still fixed upon my face: "she is at home."

"I know her. I am a friend. Let me go up."

I pushed her aside, and ran up the staircase, and into the sitting-room which faced it, and there—nursing a tiny infant at her breast, and

singing softly to it, in the old sweet voice—sat my sister Anna.

"Margaret!"

She rose and faced me. The deep red blood rushed over her face and neck, and then, receding, left her deadly pale.

"O Anna! I did not know this. You are a mother, Anna! O Anna, Anna! let me kiss your child."

With sobs, and half-uttered words, and passionate embraces, we clung together, holding the little baby between us. And so we wept, and wept, until, thank God! the flowing tears washed from my innermost soul, the last lingering bitterness of anger.

When we grew calmer and could speak to each other—that was not for a long time—Anna asked me if Uncle Gough were coming, and if he knew of my visit? But, in her quick way, she read the answer in my face before I could utter it, and drew back with the curved haughty lip I knew so well.

"Ah, no. I see. He is still hard, and implacable, and vindictive. Well, we must endure it. That is all."

"Hush, hush, Anna! Do not speak so; I cannot hear it. Tell me about yourself. How old is your baby? What is its name?"

"Poor little thing! She is very wee and frail, isn't she? Only two months old. We came away from the north, as soon as I was able to travel. She is called Lily."

I remembered Horace having once told me that his mother's name had been Lillias. As I looked more closely at my sister, and as her face recovered itself after the strong emotion of our meeting, I saw that she was thin and worn. She was very lovely, with the rich dark curls clustering round her forehead, and her lustrous brown eyes that looked larger than ever, from the thinness of her face; but her cheek was very pale, and there were lines of care and suffering about her mouth, and the mark on her forehead, which told of the frequent contraction of her handsome brows, had deepened.

"Little lily, poor small lily, little fair white lily, you don't know me; do you? I am Aunt Margaret, and you must be very good to me, and love me very much."

I had taken the infant in my arms, and I hushed it until it fell into a slumber, when Anna told me to place it on a couch in the room that was prepared for it with pillows and a light warm shawl.

"Hark!" cried Anna, as I laid the sleeping baby down; "that is his step. Here is Horace."

I have a confused remembrance of breathing a hurried prayer for strength, while that foot-step mounted the stair; and then his hand was on the lock and he stood before us. Anna advanced to meet him, and put her hands upon his shoulders; but his eye had lighted upon me, where I stood trembling like some guilty creature. Dashing down the papers he carried in his hand, he put his wife aside, and with a cry which I shall never forget, sprang across the room and clasped me in his arms. It was

so sudden, that for a second I was powerless to move. But almost instantly I released myself from his embrace, and, retreating a step or two, held out my hand. I was astonished at my own strength, now that the test had come.

"Forgive me," said Horace, passing his hand over his forehead, "it was so unexpected. I—I did not know what I was doing when I caught sight of your face. Forgive me."

"Forgive you!" cried a voice, so hard and strained, that I started, scarcely knowing it for my sister's. She stood looking at us, and her dark brows were knit, and her eyes flashed menacingly, and I saw what the change was that the year had made in Anna's face. All the youth had gone out of it.

"Forgive you!" she exclaimed. "Do you remember that your wife is present? Has the sight of Margaret so overwhelmed you, as to blot out from your memory the past twelve months?"

Horace dropped my hand and turned towards her.

"No, no, no," he answered, "I have not forgotten, Anna, that you are my wife."

Something in his tone jarred upon her irritable nerves and set her in a flame. The old furious temper took possession of her, and shook her slender figure. She heaped reproaches on us both, until I stood aghast to hear her.

"You had best be silent, Margaret," said Horace, turning to me. "She is a mad woman while the fit is on her."

He then sat motionless, with his head bowed upon his hands. Anna's loud angry tones awoke the child, who set up a piteous wail. I stooped to take it in my arms and soothe it; but she snatched it from me, and pressed it to her breast with a fierce clasp.

"She is mine, my child! You shall not touch her! Her love, at least, I can claim." Then, turning to her husband: "You are a weak fool. Do you think I cannot see what old infatuation has come back at the sight of Margaret? You are a weak fool. What was her love to mine? She never loved you. Why, at this moment, see how calm she stands! What did she ever do to prove her love? Would *she* have planned, schemed, defrauded, lied, to win you?"

"Stop, Anna, in Heaven's name!" cried Horace, rising. "Say no more while this mad temper possesses you. Spare us, and spare yourself."

"No; I will not spare myself. I did plan, I did scheme, I did defraud, I did lie. I was false to my sister, to my uncle, to every one. There was nothing I would not have done or risked for you, because I loved you so, and because it seemed as if my great love *must* win you in the end."

"If neither for my sake nor your own, then for our child's, I beseech you to command yourself," said Horace.

The vehemence of her passion had so exhausted her that she burst into a storm of hysterical sobs, and fell back upon the couch with

the baby wailing and moaning in her arms. Horace went to her, and motioned me away as I advanced:

"Go now, Margaret. You can do no good," he said softly. And indeed Anna's sobs redoubled at my approach, and she shrank away from me. "Go, and try to forget this miserable scene. God ever bless you for coming, Margaret! Don't——" he hesitated, and then went on in a lower voice—"don't quite desert us. We deserve nothing at your hands, but you are not one to balance that bitter truth against our need of you. And—and, for the sake of this innocent little one, don't desert us, Margaret. Don't quite desert us."

I went away from the room and from the house; and, out of the dark sea of sorrow around me, only one thought rose clearly into my mind. That he had loved me, until she turned his heart against me. That he had been deceived. That he had not been coldly false.

For some days after, I hesitated whether or not I should tell my uncle that I had been to see Anna. Had my visit ended peacefully, or given me any hope of happier relations arising between us, I would have risked his short-lived anger, and confessed the truth at once. But I shrank from the idea of a recurrence of such harrowing scenes. I could not tell whether he knew of Horace's return to Willborough; but I thought it almost impossible that he should still be ignorant of it. So the week went by, and I was still undecided. At last I resolved to let Uncle Gough know by indirect means. So I requested Stock to gather some choice wall-fruit, for which the gardens of the Gable House were famous, as I wished to send a present to a friend. The old man brought the fruit wrapped in vine-leaves to the morning-room, where I was sitting, and where Uncle Gough was deep in the perusal of the weekly Gazette from London. Poor Stock was very feeble now, and bent by rheumatism. My aunt's death had been a real grief to the old man, whose few attachments were very strong and lasting.

"I've been an' got what's left on 'em, Miss Margrit. They bain't like they used to be, but the Lord's will be done!"

"Thank you, Stock. They look very fine, I think."

"Ah, look! If looks was all, some on us 'ud stand but a poor chance. Them nectarines—why, I can remember the season afore iver Bill Green set foot in the place, they was one mash o' juiciness. Bustin' they was with ripeness. Seems to me as tho' summat had clean took the flavour out of everything." Uncle Gough glanced over the newspaper:

"Ay, ay, Stock. I begin to find that out myself. I'm afraid you and I are both suffering from a complaint that is apt to take the flavour out of everything. Old age, Stock, old age. But," he added gently, "it will cure itself, it will cure itself."

"Yes, sure, sir," answered Stock, conveying something like softness into his hard immov-

able face and monotonous voice, in an indescribable way. "Yes, sure; an' the cure 'll be a lastin' an' a blessed un. Once we gits through the valley o' the shadow, there'll be joyful meetin's t'other side. An' no more partin's. That's the blesseddest, sir, baint it? No more partin's."

"Margaret," said my uncle suddenly, when the old man had withdrawn, and I was packing the fruit in an open basket, "who are those nectarines for?" I trembled, but I had made this opportunity, and would not let it slip. So I took courage to answer in as steady a voice as I could command: "Dear uncle, I hope you will not be angry. I thought I might have them. They are to send to my sister Anna."

He still held the Gazette before him, so that I could not see his face; but I heard the paper rustle and shake in the dead silence that ensued. I was very much frightened. At length my uncle rose from his chair and walked slowly towards the door; but before he reached it, he held out his hand, and I ran into his arms. "God bless thee, my bairn!" he said very softly, and I felt a tear drop on my forehead. His hand was on the lock, but he paused in the act of opening the door, and said, without turning or looking at me: "I'm going into the garden, my lass. There's a vast of fruit and flowers almost spoiling there. Take whatever you want, and do as you like with them. You—you need never tell me anything about it."

In this way, I obtained an indirect permission to send many little gifts from the Gable House to my sister, and they were accepted. It was a long time before I could bring myself to visit her again, but I did so at last, having heard from one of the servants that the child was ailing sadly. After that, I constantly went to see her. I always chose those hours for going, when Horace would probably be absent; and during several months I did not see him half a dozen times. Anna's manner to me fluctuated; but though she was often fretful, irritable, and unreasonable, there was no repetition of the outburst to which she gave way on the occasion of our first meeting. Little Lily was fading and pining, and our anxiety and love for the dear child was a common ground of sympathy between us.

I had had several letters from Madame de Beauguet, giving pleasant accounts of herself and her husband. I had kept her informed, as well as I could, of all that had befallen at the Gable House; of my aunt's death, and of Anna's marriage. My letters, as you may suppose, had but dreary exchanges for her bright cheerful epistles. But she wished for them, and was glad to hear all about myself that I could make up my mind to tell her. I know she was glad to get my letters, because she said so. Anna would often ask to have news of the De Beauguets. Their life in Canada, and the kind of people who surrounded them, seemed to have an inexhaustible interest for her. Gradually I discovered that she was eagerly endeavouring to persuade Horace to leave Eng-

land altogether, and try his fortunes abroad. He was restless and unhappy here, she said. Things were not going well with him. There, in America, he would have a wide field for his talents, and would work with energy. But I believe there was a secret unacknowledged feeling at the bottom of her heart that he would belong to her, more entirely and exclusively, when once he should be divided from the familiar scenes and friends that still claimed any regard from him at home. Be that as it might, Anna had set her heart upon this scheme, and pursued it with headlong vehemence. How Horace thought of it, I could not tell; he never spoke to me on the subject. And, besides, as I have said, we very, very seldom met. But an unforeseen and painful circumstance unexpectedly occurred to make him think seriously of the project. Old Mr. Lee was in the habit of receiving large sums of money for the baronet, his employer, and, Sir Robert being seldom at the Hall, had very nearly absolute control of the property. There was no appeal from Mr. Lee's decision for any tenant on the estate. Notwithstanding an arrogant pomposity of manner, and an implicit belief in the infallibility of his own wisdom, he was considered, on the whole, to deal fairly between landlord and tenant. Even those who most disliked him—I am sorry to say they were rather numerous—had to restrict their animadversions to the offensive "stuck-up-ishness of his manner." "Our old gander 'minds me always of Mr. Lee," said Farmer Gibson once. "When he swims under the stone arch of the bridge on the river, he ducks his head down every time, just as though he was high enough and strong enough to carry away bridge and all, if he wasn't precious careful. Now, the arch is a good six foot over him, let him crane his neck up as he will; but the silly bird can't see that. It's just the same with the steward. Why, when he comes into our place, he stoops down, so condescending, for fear he should do us a mischief like. Lord, we're a mile above his head all the time! Only, ye see, he don't know it, no more 'n the gander."

Unfortunately, this blind pride was destined to have a fall which crushed other people in its ruins. I dare say my uncle had heard rumours of the impending crash, in Willborough, before it came. Disaster seldom comes unheralded by a warning atmosphere of its own. But I lived so entirely out of even our little world, that the evil tidings took me quite unprepared. It seems that Mr. Lee, relying solely on his own judgment, and taking no counsel of those whose experience might have guided him, had embarked all he possessed in a ruinous speculation, which burst, leaving him, and many others, nearly penniless. But this was not the worst. The worst was overwhelmingly bad. It was hinted that Mr. Lee had not risked and lost his own, merely. For the error in judgment of losing his own, perhaps more pity than indignation might have been bestowed on him: though, in truth, the world is generally very angry with people who lose their money, and

finds it dreadfully hard to forgive that offence. But it was asserted that a very large sum which Mr. Lee had received for Sir Robert, and which he should have deposited in the county bank, had been appropriated by him to this other purpose—no doubt with the full intention of replacing it—and was lost with his own property in the general ruin. I first heard the news from Anna, who was half-distracted about it. "He has disgraced us—disgraced Horace. That is the misery. The loss of his own money would have been a serious misfortune, of course. But this is shame and ruin." I cautioned my sister not to speak in that unguarded way until the truth of the matter should be positively ascertained. But she took this in ill part, asking me if I supposed the good name of her husband's father were not as dear to her as to me? Briefly, she was in no mood to be argued with, and I could only hope that, in her excitement, she had exaggerated the extent of the evil. But on venturing to speak to my uncle of the matter, I learned, to my dismay, that the worst had been confirmed, and that Mr. Lee would not only be a ruined man, but one with a slur upon his name henceforward. "Uncle, what will they do with Mr. Lee? Can Sir Robert punish him? How will it be?" In my anxiety, I forgot the tacit understanding between us that the name of Lee was never more to be mentioned at the Gable House. Uncle Gough forgot it too, perhaps; for he answered with a troubled face, "My lassie, it is a bad business. I am told his son is making every effort to repay the money belonging to Sir Robert; if he can do so, they say it will be hushed up. As to old Lee's own savings, they are blown to the four winds of heaven, like the dust of last summer." This was the calamity which made Horace finally resolve to leave England. He sold his share in Rotherwood's business to young Clinch; and the sum thus raised, together with his savings during the past year, sufficed to replace Sir Robert's money. I believe the baronet behaved considerately, and forbore to take legal proceedings, on the assurance from Horace that his property should be restored. But of course Mr. Lee lost the situation he had filled so many years, and in his old age was cast destitute on the world. When all was done, there remained but a slender store wherewith to take Horace and his wife and child to Canada. He resolved on going first to Quebec, in the hope that De Beaupré—now a prosperous man—might be able to assist him to find employment. It was a sad, sad time. I was with them very much, rendering what assistance I could. Soon after it was settled that they should go, my uncle announced to me one day that he would be absent from Willborough for a week or so.

"I'm going to bide with Norcliffe, Madge," he said. "He has often asked me to go and see him, but I have never had the heart to do it yet. You'll be more at liberty when I am out of the way for a season. I'll be back with you, my darling, on the twentieth."

Horace and my sister were to leave Will-

borough on the nineteenth. Before my uncle started for Beachington, almost at the last moment, he gave me a little packet.

"This," said he, nervously, "is for you, Madge. It is your own, to do as you will with. I put no restriction whatever on the use you are to make of it, but don't let me hear of it any more."

When he was gone, I opened it. It contained a bank-note for fifty pounds. The few days preceding my sister's departure were very busy days, and seemed to fly past us.

On the last evening I was left alone with Horace. Anna had quitted us to put her infant to rest, and we sat in the bare dismantled room, surrounded by the discomfort and desolation which attend the preparations for a long journey, while the evening shadows were deepening rapidly into darkness. Then, for the first time, I learned that old Mr. Lee was to accompany them. "I could not leave my father here, to starve, Margaret," said Horace. "I have no means of providing for him. He must cast in his lot with us. Besides, Willborough scenes and Willborough people are painful to him now. It is best that we should all go and hide our shame and misery together."

"I hope," said I, faltering, "I hope and trust your going may be for the best. There are some here who think that this—this—"

"This disgrace," suggested Horace, bitterly. "—this misfortune—need not have driven you from England. You, at least, are blameless."

"Am I?" he returned, in a tone that sent a sharp pang to my heart. "Yes, oh yes! I am blameless. Margaret, do you think I could have gone on living this life much longer? It was killing me."

"Horace!"

"Yes, it was killing me, and killing her. We can never know happiness again."

"O, Horace, do not say so!"

"Never, never again. But at least the daily and hourly torture we both endure in this place may be lessened. I am a wretch to distress you, Margaret," he said, rising and going to the window: "a selfish wretch. But the truth is, I am worn out, mind and body, by these last few weeks. I scarcely know what I am doing sometimes."

I saw his hand go wearily up to his head against the dim window-pane.

"I know you are not well," I answered, struggling to regain composure; "I have seen it for some time. The voyage and the change may be of service to you, and to my poor pale Lily. Horace, I have but one other word to say, and I say it with my whole heart—be good to Anna. She loves you; be patient with her; remember she will have but you in all the world now."

"God help her, poor girl!" he answered. "Yes, Margaret, you may trust me to be patient with her. Who should be patient with her, if not I? We must help each other."

When Anna rejoined us, we sat and talked awhile with some poor assumption of cheerful-

ness. We spoke of our old governess, and of her wedding day, and I sent many messages to her and to her husband. Before I left, I went to look at baby, sleeping in her cot, and slipped into her little tender hand a paper containing my uncle's gift. I had written on it, "To Lily, from Aunt Margaret." But, the following day the little servant brought me a letter, left with her for me by my sister. It contained the bank-note and these words: "If my uncle chooses to recognise me as his niece and adopted daughter, I will cheerfully accept his assistance; but I will take nothing in the shape of alms from you. A. L."

Stubborn, self-tormenting spirit! Poor misguided girl!

FISH OUT OF WATER.

ALL animals, says the Darwinian theory, spring from an aquatic origin; witness, not merely the wagging of their tails, but the simple presence of a tail itself. When a lion, about to make the fatal spring, lashes his tail, it is only an innate habitual trick, inherited from his great-great-grandmother several millions of times removed—some shark-like scourge of primeval seas.

Take a fish of prey—and very few are not fishes of prey—improve his air-bladder into a lung, stiffen his four fins into legs, finish them off with claws, leave him his scales, or, if you prefer it, either weld them into a pachydermatous hide, or convert them into shaggy fur, with bristling mane and whiskers to match; above all, leave him his tail, which may terminate in a fly-brush or in a sting, and you have at once a land animal, from which, if you met it in a narrow lane, you would probably run away. The Dragon of Wantley was thus generated, perhaps, as well as other monsters slain by heroes.

When an animal has no tail, as apes and others, the proof of its watery birth is none the weaker. It dropped its tail when it came out of the water, as a lady leaves her bathing-dress in the machine. The frog, for instance, when it ceases to be a tadpole, bequeaths its tail to its younger companions. The newt does not: preferring to retain that appendage as an ornament in after-life. It is a mere matter of taste and fashion. The absence of a tail is no guarantee whatever that any creature is not a fish out of water.

Fishes themselves, with almost human perverseness, will get tired of their proper element, and voluntarily put themselves out of water. There are fishes which range the meadows by night, fishes which creep up sluice-gates and rocks, fishes which take leaps worthy of steeple-chasers, fishes which amuse themselves by climbing trees, fishes which take long flights in the air. I say nothing about singing fishes; because, although the singing is unquestionable, the singers have never been caught in the fact.

The dragon-fly is a fish (and a very fierce fish)

out of water, though harmless, nay serviceable, in its flying state, *to us*, whatever complaints flies may make of its conduct. Gnats, again, are fish out of water, who, if they render stagnant pools less offensive to the palate and the nose, have their full revenge afterwards in the bloody fees they exact for their services. The delicate ephemera which charms us with its gauzy wings and golden eyes, is anything but ephemeral as a caddis-worm at the bottom of a ditch or rivulet.

What shall we say of creatures which are at home everywhere, except in the midst of a blazing fire?

You are indulging in a reverie on the brink of the artificial lake which graces your lawn. You are calculating how many gallons of green pea-soup your Mediterranean contains, when past you whistles a shower of *ærolites*. Luckily, they are not bigger than bullets, and not one of them happens to touch you. Curious! They all fall into the pond, and instead of sinking straightway to the bottom, fraternise with friends whom they find already there, and commence swimming and diving with all their might and main. Another party, tired of water-frolics, shoot up suddenly from the surface, and whirl round your head before their departure. A few, more modest, crawl out on the ground, to take their travels amongst the grass.

Was the fair owner of an aquarium never startled—while chanting on her piano by twilight one of Weber's or Beethoven's waltzes, and throwing her whole soul into the tips of her fingers—by the sound of a humming-top floating round the room, ending with the heavy impact of a chilly body on her neck? She might take it, at first, for the eminent and exact Mr. Home, entering by the window, and favouring her with one of his aerial exercises; but she would discover it to be her dear *Dytiscus*, indulging in an evening flight. To hinder which, the aquarium henceforth must be covered with a muslin net.

Ducks, awks, and penguins, the most oceanic, hide their diminished heads before water-beetles; for these are at once fish out of water, flying things and land things plunged in water, and creepierawlies launched in air. You can neither drown them, nor bury them alive, nor break their necks by throwing them out of window. If you put them on the fire in a frying-pan, they will spread their wings and escape up the chimney. They are invulnerable, except by roasting on a spit, or pounding (and that rapidly) in a mortar.

And so the various modes of existence are intricately dovetailed one into the other, puzzling ordinary observers to say Who is Who, or What is What. If water creatures quit their liquid home, air-breathing animals intrude and take firm possession of it. Whales and porpoises have no legitimate right to establish themselves where they are; they *ought* to be dwellers on dry land.

Seals and morses are inexcusable in their perverse indifference to sound dry land, unless they are victims of an irresistible appetite and an inordinate craving after fish. The manatee—so

like a mermaid that sailors, deprived of female society, have fallen deeply in love with it—still further attests its affinity to landswomen, by having nails that will scratch, at the tips of its fins.

The hippopotamus clearly retires to the bottom of the Nile, in order to avoid being baconised like a pig, drained of its natural juices like a cow, slain for its teeth like an elephant, or made to work for its living like an overgrown donkey. For my own part, I had as lief be called “a hippopotamus” as do the drudgery performed by sundry land animals. The happy hippopotamus bears no mark of metal collar round his neck; and, with the thermometer at 90° Fahr., who would not be he?

The otter, the beaver, and the water-rat, are merely to be considered as amateurs with a strong hankering after aquatics, and a full acquiescence in abstinence from flesh. They are really landmen, though fond of bathing; they are hereditary proprietors of residences on the banks of streams. They are fresh-water sailors at heart, even though a marine villa may be their temporary home.

If land animals be a party of swimmers who have finally left the waves for the shore, plants are not unlikely to have adopted a similar change of habitation. We can conceive the earth entirely covered with an ocean teeming with fish and tangled with seaweed. Such plants would have their mass continually submerged, never indulging in an air-bath. They would be more permanently confined to water than, probably, many of the fish themselves, which in all ages have delighted to float, and to bask in the sun and leap into the air. The first-born plants would be, perforce, necessarily and completely aquatic; thoroughly fish-plants.

But now that dry land *has* appeared and the phenomena of the tides are visibly manifest—now that twice in every twenty-four hours a portion of the ocean’s bed lies bare and dry—we know that certain seaweeds can not only be fish out of water for a time, but support treatment of the roughest kind. Throughout the world, the strip of shore, which lies between high and low-water mark, is tenanted by plants which, when not covered by the sea, are baked in sunshine, burnt by frost, torn by hurricanes, and deluged by sheets of fresh water, enough to reduce them to cinder or pap, and to wash the life-salt out of their frame. A brave old plant, most certainly, is the famous ivy green of the song; but a braver is the bladder fucus, enduring what it does as a fish out of water. It discovers land, takes possession of it, and holds its own in spite of all resistance.

Many plants, too, which you would believe confined to the marsh, are nevertheless members of an Alpine club. You left them on the sea-level, and they welcome you on cloud-capped heights. The pretty *parnassia* imbibes mist with its leaves, as kindly as it sucks in wet with its roots. Others, like the golden-flowered moneywort (which makes such a pretty fringe

to a balcony), settle indifferently on the skirts of a swamp, or on the crumbling brink of a gravelly upland.

An able cultivator of palm-trees has let out the secret that, when they fail in our hothouses, it is mostly because of a stint of water. But the very love of many land plants for water and its neighbourhood, shows that plants, though thirsty souls in general, may be still made to put up with a certain amount of thirstiness. As Venus is said (in poetry) to linger near her native sea, so there are plants which, although they *live* inland, never thrive so well as within an easy distance from the shore. The list is long; the numbers which have *maritimus*, *a*, *um*, for their specific name, constitute only a few. To us, insular observers, the fact does not present itself so strikingly, because the whole United Kingdom is more or less maritime, compared with continental areas.

The cork-tree, the fig-tree, the tree-mallow, the cocoa-nut-tree, asparagus, sea-kale, cabages, many mesembryanthemums, and a host of others, thoroughly enjoy being fanned by sea breezes. The mangrove even enjoys a salt-water foot-bath so much as to be answerable for the stories about cockles and oysters growing upon trees. “At Sierra Leonna,” says The Wonders of Nature, “there is the oyster-tree, which has no other fruit but oysters. It has a very broad leaf, almost as thick as leather. The boughs hang down a good way into the water, and are overflowed by the tide. On the mud and slush that stick to them, the young oysters bred there fasten, and that in such vast numbers that one can hardly see anything almost, but long ropes of oysters.”

The study of fish out of water has its interest, though we may never hope to see flocks of carp and tench straggling over our lawns. Lakes and streams give birth to many organisms which are not included in ichthyology proper; and the question what aquatic vegetables we can persuade to live and thrive out of water, is important not merely in a decorative, but in an utilitarian point of view. If celery has been induced to desert its native ditch and grow fat and fine in our kitchen-gardens, there is no reason why other good things should not follow its example. A recent Gardener’s Chronicle says: “A supply of watercresses for autumn and winter may be easily obtained by planting some strong young tops, about four inches long, in a line at the foot of a north wall. The cuttings should be of pieces which have roots protruding from the joints. Watercresses will grow freely in such a situation. And where there are no artificial beds, and natural ones are a considerable distance off, these will be found useful.”

There are water-flowers which take pattern by the watercress, presenting themselves and their foliage independent of floods. One of my rambling grounds is a large tract of marshes abounding in vegetable and animal life. There are deep pools, shallow ditches, banks of mud

uncovered by water, and dry ground tilled by the spade and the plough. In all these sites, except the latter, the white water-lily is abundant. In the pools, it sends up long leaf and flower stalks; in the shallower places, proportionally shorter ones; on the muddy patches, with no water over them, it assumes the habit of a herbaceous plant, which only requires judicious treatment to make magnificent "bedding stuff." Here is a fish out of water worth catching, and it will be strange if somebody do not take the hint. Our gardeners are perfectly competent to carry it out.

BUSILY ENGAGED.

"It must be done, Dick, my boy," said my uncle, mournfully, as he filled his glass, and pushed the claret to me. "Come, now, make up your mind; off with you to-morrow, and success attend you."

"My dear uncle, once more let me——"

"My dear nephew, you have done it so often that repetition is useless. I am not a harsh relative, or I should simply say, 'Dick, go and be married;' or, as my theatrical prototype—especially if wealthy—was wont to express himself, 'Don't talk to *me*, young sir. Off, puppy, and be married, or never see my face again.' No, my dear Dick, I belong to a race of civilised uncles, and I confine myself to a line of argument which ought to weigh more with you than any commands of mine. It was the desire of your good father that you should marry before you were twenty-six."

"But I am not twenty-six, and——"

"You will be in a month," returned my uncle, with wonderful recollection. "Why, there's not a day to lose."

"Well, but, my dear sir——" I began, with some consternation.

"I'll cut this matter short," said my uncle. "You remember what the great Duke said to that other strong-handed veteran—when India was in sore need—'*You or I*.'"

"Perfectly. By-the-by, now, what do you think, sir, would have been the result, supposing Napier——"

"We will pursue that branch of the subject on a future occasion," said Sir Richard, dryly.

"In the mean time, go where love, if not glory, waits you, together with, I should imagine, about eight thousand pounds."

"It appears, then, that my wife is already found."

"Found, yes. Selected, no," said my uncle.

"There is more than one candidate for my affections?"

"There are—let me see," said my uncle, calculating, "nine."

"Nine?"

"My old friend and college-chum, Bob Crowdie," said Sir Richard Purkiss, "has nine daughters. One—a sweet, charming girl—is unhappily deformed. Out of the remainder, Crowdie is anxious—and so am I—that you

should select the partner of your life, and, my dear boy, since I have never known you express anything but an indifference, almost amounting to contempt, for the entire sex, I trust you will the more readily fall into our views."

"I know so little of these good people——"

"Don't call them 'good people,' sir, as if they were fishwives," said my uncle, a little warmly. "If you don't know them better, the fault's your own. They like *you*, Dick. Come, I may say that—and—and—I fear I am telling tales; but I am by no means sure that you have not (unintentionally, of course) somewhat compromised the peace of mind of Miss—of *one* of them, already."

"I am glad it's the only one," I said, laughing. "But are you serious? If so, you should at least tell me frankly to which of these young ladies you refer."

"There, you must excuse me. That I cannot do," said my uncle, mysteriously. "No. Were I to indicate Miss Crowdie, I might be doing an injustice to Miss Sophia, or, by pointing, however indirectly, to Miss Lucy, I might divert your ideas from my pretty Mattie, whose claim, without prejudice to Ethel, might only be exceeded by my little Laura Jane. In short——"

"Enough. Let the doubt remain. It gives a mysterious charm to the expedition. But there is still a difficulty."

"I see none," said my uncle, impatiently.

"Supposing, among so many, I should find it impossible to make my selection?"

"Oh, is *that* all?" said Sir Richard, much relieved. "I think that obstacle might be easily overcome. Let Crowdie choose. He is the best judge of his own children. Yes; I am clear you could not do better than refer it entirely to him. And I think I can promise you, Dick," added my uncle, cheerfully, "that he has already made up his mind."

"I am sure he is very kind," said I. "But, uncle, *to-morrow*?"

"As I have already observed," returned Sir Richard, "*you or I*. My brother's earnest desire was that there should be a direct heir in our family, and he named twenty-six as the latest age to which he could wish your marriage deferred. You have neglected to make your choice, and hang me if I think you ever will. Now, mark me, if you don't, *I shall*. I am told men do marry at sixty—generally some chit of eighteen—and I know a pretty little thing of the sort (she's at school, not a hundred miles hence), whom, as your aunt, you could not fail to revere. As for my testamentary intentions, Dick, I have never made a mystery of them. You are my heir. But, if I marry, my wife and my children will take away the bulk of the fortune I would fain have had descend upon you. Come, Dick, set me free from this responsibility. Go and visit these good friends to-morrow, and let your first letter announce to me that you are engaged."

The kind old man extended his hand. I

pressed it in acquiescence, and the next day departed for the residence of Mr. Crowdie.

Not being quite certain whether my uncle had prepared the family for my visit, I thought it expedient to give it the appearance of a morning call, and accordingly, leaving my luggage at the village inn, I strolled up to the mansion. The whole family were in the garden, and thither I proceeded.

The party assembled on the lawn was of appalling dimensions. About eighteen young ladies and one young man were engaged at croquet; while Mr. and Mrs. Crowdie, with Alice the deformed reclining on a chair couch, looked on. Six of the players eliminated themselves from the company, and came to greet me.

"Now comes the question," thought I, "of which of these fair-cheeked maidens have my dangerous attractions and assiduous attentions proved the bane?"

Miss Mattie, with the brown frank eyes, was quicker than the rest, and gave me her hand.

"It isn't *you*," I thought, and dismissed her gently back to her game.

Miss Crowdie followed, laughing gaily. She had a wide but handsome mouth, and pearl-white teeth.

"Nor *you*," I thought.

"Just in time, Mr. Purkiss," cried Miss Laura Jane, shyly offering me a mallet.

"Doubtful—ha!" was my reflection.

Miss Sophy gave me neither hand nor word, but just lifted eyes of the colour of a forget-me-not, and dropped them again, while a slight but rich blush passed over her smooth cheek.

"*Aha!*" I whispered to myself.

Mr. and Mrs. Crowdie now joined the group. The lady was quiet and reserved, and wore a sort of astonished look, which was said to have been not always habitual with her, but had increased with the advent of each successive daughter, until the birth of Laura Jane placed her in a condition of permanent amazement, to which no language was apparently adequate; for she never spoke, except in answer, or in faint disclaimer of the replies and observations perpetually attributed to her by her facetious husband. The latter was a bluff, plain-spoken man, so plain, indeed, that to mistake him for vulgar would have been a pardonable error, had he not prided himself upon that very bluntness, esteeming it an essential characteristic of the good old country squire.

"Ha, ha, ha!" was his greeting, with a poke in the ribs, which I cleverly dodged. "Here you find us at our daily sports, and precious finikin stuff it is. No bowls, or leap-frog, or single-stick now. Croquet, sir, croquet is the game. It's imbecile in principle, and absurd in practice. It tends, I am told, to softening of the brain, but, by a wise provision of nature, those most devoted to the game appear to be endowed with a less proportion of the organ."

"What I see before me somewhat contradicts your theory, sir," I said.

"Oh, my daughters are no fools. I don't

mean that. They play because they have good ankles. Mrs. Crowdie often tells me she never saw a string of wenches with cleaner pasterns."

"Oh, Philip!" said Mrs. Crowdie, "how *can* you?"

"And how is my good old friend, hey?" continued Mr. Crowdie, putting his hands behind him, and looking as burly as he possibly could. "Not married yet? Faith, I expect to hear it every day. As Mrs. Crowdie observed to me, he's just the jolly old boy to do it!"

"Oh, Philip, really——" protested Mrs. Crowdie.

"Come, Dick the younger, if I may call you so, for hang me if your uncle doesn't look as young as you, go and take a club or mallet, or whatever they call it, with those impatient hussies, and, when you want to be refreshed with rational conversation, come back, as my wife always says, to *us*."

"Oh, Philip!"

"Stop one moment. Here's a girl of mine you have hardly ever seen. Mr. Purkiss, my darling," he added, tenderly leaning over her.

Alice raised herself a little, and smiled. Such a smile—soft, bright, saint-like—as if rather yielding than seeking pity. I bowed, mechanically, lower than my wont, and, next minute, found myself absorbed in the imbecilities of croquet.

The game, as it chanced, came to a premature end—if, to such a sport, such an end be possible—those ladies not belonging to the house having to seek their respective homes. The rest dispersing in different directions, it so happened that I was left alone with the pretty Sophy. I was really astonished at this girl's beauty. Why had I never noticed it before? Her sweet yet timid manner perfectly captivated me. I was angry when the dressing-bell announced that we must part.

To my great surprise, I found a room prepared for me, and my portmanteau—surreptitiously sent for from the inn—unpacked. This was a good sign. I hurried my dressing, thinking all the time of Sophy's eyes. A change was coming over me. I had always abhorred the thought of marriage. Now the prospect gave me a thrill of delight."

"Sir Hugh," said my host to the dull young man, who had been playing croquet all day, and looked as if he had done nothing else all his life, "take Miss Crowdie. Richard, bring Sophy. My wife and I always trudge in together, like Punch and Judy."

(There was a tradition in the family that by this, his favourite expression, Mr. Crowdie meant Darby and Joan.)

I saw more of Sophy's long lashes that day than of my own plate. To my great surprise, I was actually falling in love with the girl, and that at express speed. Dinner passed away like a dream, and the chair beside me was vacant. The cheery voice of my host aroused me:

"Come up here, my dear fellow. Hugh—Sir Hugh Sagramore—had to leave us, as they have a party at home."

I saw we were alone.

"Hark ye, my dear Purkiss!" continued my host. "I'm going to speak to you like a bluff old fellow as I am. Fathers have sharpish eyes. I observed your manner to-day, and I think I can make a shrewd guess what has given us the pleasure of your company. You know my plain way, and will pardon me if I anticipate what should certainly have been allowed to come from you. You are interested in my little Soph?"

"My dear sir," I answered, promptly, "I am greatly indebted to you for your correct estimate of my feelings. I am, indeed—to adopt your own expression—interested in Miss Sophia, and, with permission of those to whom she is so deservedly dear, I——"

"Dick, my boy, say not another word"—my kind (future) parent-in-law grasped my hand—"win her. Take her. She is yours. I give my girls each their eight thousand—interest for my life—principal after. So much for that. You will inform your uncle to-morrow?"

"Certainly, my dear sir. But—ahem!—the—young lady——"

"Psha! I forgot that," said my impulsive host. "Well, I think you may be pretty sure. Still, as you say, it might be as well—just excuse me a moment." And he bustled out of the room.

I had hardly collected my ideas when he was back again.

"All right. Some more wine? No? Well, then, just go and see how you like our new orchids in the conservatory. There's the door."

I went in. It was growing dusk, but I could detect a fairy form moving among the shrubs. I followed it, and gently took the little pendent hand. It was not withdrawn. What I said, I certainly shall not write. Let everybody propose for himself. The murmurs that responded to mine were eminently satisfactory. My happiness was only equalled by my astonishment at the whole matter. Both were profound.

A little difficulty now arose. It behoved me to plead for an early day for our union. I had been so slightly acquainted with the family, that I had positively never exchanged a dozen words with this beloved of my soul. It might be almost said, I had not known her at all till within these three hours. How, then, can I fitly introduce the subject of my intense impatience? Shall I leave it to my plain-spoken papa-in-law? No. Here goes.

"And now, *dearest* Sophy (ah, that sweet name)!"

"Sweet enough, but it's not *mine*," retorted my affianced lady.

"N-not—yours!" I stammered, a strange misgiving stealing over me.

"Certainly not," was the reply; and, as she turned to the light, I beheld the face of Miss Crowdie.

"I—I—eh—why, what is this?" said I.

The young lady burst into tears, and hid her face in her hands.

"Mamma t-told me—you w-w-wished to speak to me," she sobbed.

I hate to see a woman weep. And *she* wept so prettily!

"My dear Miss Crowdie——"

"C-call me Su-hu-san."

"Well, Susan dear, let me wipe off that falling——" I was gliding into the old song, and also, strange as it may seem, into a degree of interest for the fair weeper hardly compatible with my previous engagements.

I scarcely know how it chanced that one of her pretty brown silken curls had got entangled on my button. While engaged in disentangling it, and murmuring words of comfort more or less coherent, Mr. Crowdie's broad face appeared at the window. To my surprise, he merely laughed merrily—adding:

"Dick, I want you. Come here a moment."

Miss Crowdie vanished, and I, leaping out at the window, joined my host.

"Dick," he said, taking my arm, "here has been a little mistake. My wife, I must tell you, has one persistent fancy. It is her fixed idea that if the eldest of a family of girls does not marry *first*, the matches of the rest will be unlucky. With a decision, for which I certainly should not have given her credit, she sent Susan in Sophy's place; and—eh—do you mind much? She's good as gold—my Susy. Come, what d'ye say?"

"But, my dear friend, Miss Sophia——"

"Oh! I'll make *that* all right. Thanks, my dear boy, you have made us very happy." And he hurried off.

"Mr. Purkiss, Mr. Purkiss, we are going for a moonlight row on the lake," cried a silver voice from an upper casement, and presently down came a bevy of damsels, in the centre of whom I recognised my present betrothed, Miss Crowdie, walking with the timid assurance of a bride, and looking, in the moonlight, I must confess, fair and graceful as Diana's self. It seemed to be an understood thing that I was to give her my arm; and thus it came to pass that, in the walk down to the lake, we were left together, an arrangement to which (I noticed with some relief) Miss Sophia's exertions greatly contributed.

They were really a charming family, on the best terms with themselves, each other, and all around them. We had a very merry row, and were in the midst of an Italian barcarole, when Mr. Crowdie's jovial voice hailed us from the landing-place.

"Let's put in *here*," said one of the party, pointing to a bank, on which we could see glow-worms sparkling.

As we neared the spot, several of the party rose at once. The boat gave a sudden lurch—there was a shriek—a plunge—a gurgle—Miss Laura Jane had toppled overboard, and gone down into the deepest part of the lake! I tore off my coat, and plunged after, catching her, I imagine, as she rose to the surface, and bore her safely to the bank. The poor child, though much frightened, did not seem materially injured by the shock. She was put carefully to bed, and all seemed going well, when, somewhat

later, the housekeeper beckoned Mrs. Crowdie out of the room.

A little after, Mr. Crowdie received a similar summons, and it became known that Laura Jane was not in a satisfactory state. She had become feverish and delirious, talking wildly of the accident, and of her rescue.

Mr. Crowdie came down with an anxious look on his broad visage.

"We think, Purkiss, that she wants to see you."

"Me, my dear sir?"

"Yes. Would you mind stepping up? My wife will be greatly obliged to you."

In a minute or two, I was beside the poor girl's couch; her mother and the nurse standing opposite, her father at the foot. Her cheek was flushed, and her eyes, bright and restless with fever, rolled eagerly from face to face, till they dwelt on mine. Then a sudden change came over her. She became calm, stretched out her little hand to me, and, closing her eyes, seemed as if she would sleep, still keeping my fingers prisoner.

"Who shall sit up with her, my dear?" asked Mr. Crowdie. "Stop! Her lips move. She knows us. She's trying to speak. Ask her, Dick, who shall sit by her?"

I repeated the question.

"*You*," was the embarrassing reply. And the little patient sank into a refreshing sleep.

As soon as I was able to release my hand, without risk of disturbing her, her mother supplied my place, and I returned to the drawing-room. All the fair company, however, even my newly-affianced Susan, had disappeared. But I was not long left alone. Mr. Crowdie soon rejoined me. His manner was embarrassed.

"Purkiss, he said, 'the child whose life you saved is very dear to me. Ahem! You do not desire to embitter the existence you have preserved?'"

I emphatically disclaimed any such intention.

"Then listen to me, Dick," resumed Mr. Crowdie. "My wife and I have arrived at the conclusion that your noble act has left an impression upon our dear girl's mind stronger than mere gratitude—to be effaced only with life."

"My good sir," I gasped.

"One moment. You are about to refer to Susan. Banish that anxiety. She is a sensible, affectionate girl, and has (I may as well mention) already assured us that no claim, no predilection of her own, shall—You understand. Permit us to welcome your alliance as the husband of my Laura Jane, and our happiness is complete."

What could I say? My affections were manifestly regarded as transferable, and they were transferred on the spot. I had the pleasure that very night of shaking hands with Mrs. Crowdie as the betrothed of Laura Jane!

"Humph!" I thought, as I lay down rather tired, "three engagements in one day will satisfy my uncle that I have not been idle!"

I was up with that bird which is erroneously supposed to be the earliest of fowls, because he

makes most disturbance about it, and enjoyed a glorious plunge in the limpid lake. On my way back from the bathing-house, towel in hand, I encountered Miss Adelaide. She was, I think, the third daughter, and reputed, by many, the beauty of the family, having a small classic head, regular features, and large dark eyes, into which there came, at intervals, a peculiar gleam. Like her mother, she was reserved. I hastened to greet her, and then eagerly added, "And now, pray tell me of our dear invalid? She has rested well, I hope?"

"She has rested well. And 'dear' she is, indeed, Mr. Purkiss, to all our hearts."

"You need not tell me that," I replied significantly. "I can only say that, if the most devoted—"

"But——"

"The most unalterable attachm——"

"Stop, I beg of you!" cried my companion. "Oh, my dear Mr. Purkiss, I have something to— to explain. There's a mistake."

"No—really? *Another*!" I muttered.

"You noticed that my dear sister clasped your hand." (I bowed gravely.) "And, when invited to say who should watch beside her, what did she reply?"

"*You*—meaning me."

"So my father thought also, dear friend. But the sound deceived you both. She said, 'Hugh, —not '*you*'—and— and forgive me, she meant Sir Hugh Sagamore, to whom, it appears, the warm-hearted child has become attached."

"The sound is *not* dissimilar," I owned—a little disconcerted. "Still——"

"If you knew how sorry I am to tell you this," said the pretty Adelaide, laying her fingers on my arm. (They were white, and beautifully carved at the taper points.) "Dear Mr. Purkiss, take comfort."

"I shall endeavour to do so," I replied, in a hollow voice. "It is a blow."

"There is a balm for every wound," said Miss Adelaide, gently.

"But what kind hand shall administer it?" I asked.

The large lustrous eyes turned upon me for a moment, and were as suddenly averted. My companion was silent. She was drawing something on the gravel-terrace with her parasol, and, to my eye, it took the form of a human heart, with a perforation in the larger valve. I accepted the omen.

"Miss Crowdie—Adelaide!——"

She gave a little start.

"Can I, dare I, hope that *you*, who knew so well how to alleviate the pain of this announcement, will enable me to forget it altogether?"

As I believe I have hinted before, such dialogues are confidential. I shall merely remark, that Adelaide and I returned to the house together, and that I whispered to my sweet companion, as we entered the breakfast-parlour,

"I shall beg an audience of papa after breakfast!"

The bluff squire saved me the trouble, how-

ever, by inviting me to come and inspect a remarkable pig.

"By jingo, as my wife says," he added. "I never feel that I've done my morning's duty till I've been the round of sty and stable!"

On the way I broached the subject nearest my heart. No sooner had I mentioned the name of "Adelaide," than my host's gratified smile gave place to an almost shocked expression. He sat down upon a railing, took off his broad-leaved hat, and fanned his agitated face.

"Purkiss," he said, "were you aware—did not your uncle ever refer to—ch—my poor Ady? Don't you *know*?"

"Know?—know *what*?"

"Dick, have you never observed a singular, an almost wild, glitter in that girl's eyes?"

I assented.

"It indicates, when frequent, an accession of a peculiar form of insanity, called 'kleptomania.' Have you your purse about you?"

"Purse, my dear sir! Of course—Yet, no. Why, bless me, I am sure I put it in my pocket."

"And *she* took it out," remarked Mr. Crowdie, mournfully. "No matter. It will be restored, with everything else she may lay hands on, in the course of the day. No, my dear boy, *here* the unhappy child is safe—harmless—understood. But she must never leave our roof. Console yourself. My wife shall talk with her, and make all square. Yet, hark ye, I cannot give up the hope of calling you my son, because our plans haven't gone smooth. Dick, I offer you the prize lamb of my flock—my little Lucy. Just you come and look at her; chat with her if you like, and if you don't lose your heart in ten minutes—"

Lucy was engaged with a class of little rustics, and being unable, for the present, to come out and be engaged to *me*, we went in and joined the class.

Lucy was correcting on the slates what she had been previously dictating.

"Ireland is famous for Peter Turf." Pray, Peter Burberry, who *is* 'Peter Turf?'" asked Lucy.

"Please, teacher, you *said* Peter Turf!" retorted Master Burberry, forcing a brown knuckle into his eye.

"True," said the young lady, smiling. "So I did. But, the next time, suppose you spell his name 'peat, or turf.'"

Mr. Burberry executed a backward kick—meant to represent a bow—from which my shins narrowly escaped, and the lesson closed.

"Look, you young ones," said the bluff squire, "I've got to take a sweep round the plantations. Get you home together, and order lunch exactly at half-past one. Off you go!"

Miss Lucy was rather shorter than her sisters, and possessed a perfect cloud of rich golden hair. Her manner was particularly frank and sweet, and she had a sense of humour which spoke intelligibly in her laughing blue eye.

"Papa is so funny!" she said, as we walked towards the house. "Do you know what he

expected? Ha! ha! Then I won't tell you. Come in."

A sudden resolution seized me.

"I *do* know what he expected, my dear young lady," I said, firmly; "and, so far as it rests with me, he certainly shall not be disappointed. You look disturbed. I entreat you to hear me. I was about to speak, when—in short, you were to have become my sister. Oh, let me have the joy of bestowing upon you a far more precious title. Be my wife!"

We forgot the lunch altogether.

When Mr. Crowdie returned, we were still lingering under the trees. He walked up straight to us, looked in Lucy's blushing face, and, placing our hands together, simply remarked:

"At last. My best hopes are realised."

My Lucy, a little agitated with all that had happened, was dismissed to lie down for an hour, while I, who had been affianced a good deal more, felt also that a little quiet meditation would restore the tone of my nerves. I accordingly sought out a little moss-covered seat, of which I knew, and there fell into a train of thought, which—owing, I take it, to the lulling whisper of the trees—ended in slumber.

Merry voices aroused me. The party had commenced croquet. Half fearing that Lucy would miss me, I hastened to the lawn. She was not there. Smothering my disappointment, I accepted a mallet and a partner—Mattie—and was soon hard at work. In one of the innumerable disgusting pauses of the game, I asked where was Lucy?

"Lucy!" exclaimed Mattie, opening her brown eyes to their widest. "Don't you know? She's gone."

"God bless me! Gone?—gone whither?"

"To Aunt Mompesson's. For two months."

"But, I—I—surely—"

"We sent to look for you, my dear Mr. Purkiss," said Mrs. Crowdie, who had quietly approached, "but the messenger found you so comfortably asleep, that he would not disturb you. We make a practice of never contradicting Mrs. Mompesson. She *would* run off with Lucy—so there's an end."

"But, your daughter—did she—didn't she—"

"She would have liked to say good-bye, but my aunt would wait no longer, and Lucy begged me to say that, if she might suggest, all that passed this morning might as well be considered as forming part of the dreams in which she heard you were indulging in the arbour. But here's Crowdie, who can tell you more."

My host bustled up, and took me by both hands, saying, with much feeling,

"Purkiss, my good friend, I am at a loss to express the sense I feel of your flattering and most persevering efforts to ally yourself with my family. Believe me, I shall never forget them. But courage, my dear boy. I have four girls yet; and if, among these—"

"The fact is," I answered, with a smile, "some fatality seems to attend upon any exercise of choice on my part. All your children are charming. If it were not wholly out of the question to submit such young ladies to such an arbitrament, I would almost venture to propose that those who deem a prize, like myself, worth the pains, should—ahem!—forgive me—draw lots for it."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the squire. "A capital idea! But they needn't *know* it, eh? Wife 'll write their names—that is, Mattie, Ethel, and Leonora—my poor Alice is out of the race—and we'll decide it where we stand."

Absurd as was the plan—for I had only meant it in pleasantry—Mr. Crowdie insisted on nailing me to my own suggestion. The names were written, the lots drawn by Mr. Crowdie himself, and Mattie was the winner.

"My dear Dick, I congratulate you!" and he caught my hand. "Believe me, you have been most fortunate."

I glanced at the unconscious Mattie, who, deserted by me, was battling away at croquet on behalf of both, and wondered what was next to be done.

"Will you"—said Mr. Crowdie—"ahem!—or—shall I?"

"*You*, by all means, my dear sir," said I. And while I strolled with Mrs. Crowdie among her azaleas, I saw him detach Mattie from the game. Presently, and quite unexpectedly, we met them at the turn of a path. Mattie's brown eyes were a little wider open than usual, but she was apparently resigned to her lot.

"Here, Dick," said Mr. Crowdie, "I give you the light of my house. And, let me tell you, it is not every one who should win her from us so easily."

I felt that I had no right to complain. Nothing could well exceed the simplicity of the process by which I *had* "won" her.

The tête-à-tête, which shortly followed, was not a prolonged one. It was, however, long enough to convince me that my new betrothed was likely to prove a pleasing, gentle wife; and it was with the sort of relief one feels in sitting down, after a hot and weary journey, under fresh green trees, that I accepted this new fortune. Making my way to the quiet deserted drawing-room, I resolved to write at once to my uncle.

I thought it just as well to say nothing of previous disappointments. It was best he should suppose that, after careful observation, I had selected Mattie as the most eligible wife, and niece-in-law of the whole party. As I wrote, I began to think she *was*, and had commenced an almost lover-like description—"My Mattie is"—when the door softly opened, and Ethel Crowdie, a little sylph-like thing, with violet eyes and large brown eyebrows that met, stole into the room. She had a rose in her hand, which, as she approached me, she picked to pieces in an embarrassed manner.

"Mr. Purkiss—oh, Mr. Purkiss!—I want to—to tell you a secret."

My mind misgave me. The pen dropped from my hand.

"A secret, Miss Ethel? *Me*?"

"Yes, you, dear Mr. Purkiss, for no one else can help us; and oh, you are so good natured! Mattie told me of your engagement, and asked me to break it to him; but, oh! I couldn't. It would kill him!"

"Kill *him*? Whom? Pray explain."

"Mr. Lowry, the curate. Such a good creature; but shy. Mattie never knew how much he loved her, but *I* did; and now—oh, Mr. Purkiss! you haven't seen much of Mattie—couldn't you, if you tried very much, like somebody else instead?"

"Answer me one question first. Did your sister authorise this appeal?"

She inclined her head.

"Enough," said I, calmly. "I not only resign my claim, but, if I can in any manner forward the views of my fortunate rival, pray command me."

"Oh, how good you are! Thanks—a thousand thanks. But it will be difficult. Papa likes you so very much."

Flattery is at all times sweet, but when it proceeds from a beautiful mouth, accompanied by a bewitching smile, who can resist?

"Perhaps," I said, "some—ahem!—device might be hit upon, that might at once meet your sister's views, and preserve to papa the connexion he is so good as to desire. Do you, my dear young lady, see what I mean?" (The damsel hung her head till I saw the white parting quite to the back.) "I see you do. Ethel, for your sister's sake . . . what say you, dear one?"

A few minutes later, I finished the letter to my uncle. It was not difficult. I carefully erased "Mattie," and substituted "Ethel."

I had little difficulty with the worthy squire. So long as he secured me (he was pleased to say) for one of his dear girls—he was comparatively indifferent which—and I saw that Mr. Lowry's suit was gained.

All now seemed smooth and happy. My intended father-in-law was yet expatiating on the peculiar fitness of the choice I had eventually made, when his wife entered the room hastily, with a letter in her hand.

"Mr. Crowdie—Philip!—I must speak to you directly."

I made a movement to withdraw.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Purkiss—I did not see you. Pray remain," said the lady; "this concerns you."

"Upon my word this is most singular!" ejaculated Mr. Crowdie, after glancing over the epistle. "It would hardly be believed! Purkiss, I scarcely know how to tell you. Spifflicate me (as my wife frequently observes)"—"Oh, Philip!" said the lady—"if here is not *another* spoke in our wheel! Mrs. Mompesson, whom we never contradict, writes me here, in confidence, that, seeing a young stranger (yourself, Dick) here, and not knowing what his intentions might be, she had stopped, on the road,

to send me this intimation that she had promised her influence with me in reference to Ethel—who is her great favourite—on behalf of Sir Edward Tottenham, who has been eagerly desiring to improve the acquaintance he made with her at the county ball. Now, my dear Dick, to offend Mrs. Mompeyson is——”

“Just so, my dear sir. It must not be. To say the truth, until you fairly presented one of your fair daughters to me at the altar, I should not regard my happiness as secured.”

“Oh, Dick, this must not end *so*!” said the squire, with genuine regret and feeling. “After all, there’s Leonora.”

“The eighth attempt, sir, may be more prosperous,” I replied, rather bitterly; “let it be so. Do with me as you please. My affections have been so perpetually nipped, that I don’t think they ought to be expected to bud again without some assurance that they will be allowed to blow.”

“Come, that is but fair,” said the squire. “Hark ye, Dick. My Leonora has no will, no fancy, except what is mine. Will you take *that* assurance? She is a dear good girl, and, though she is at this moment out for a walk, you may—yes, I am *sure* you may—consider yourself as engaged.”

I bowed, and remembered, with some satisfaction, that my letter to my uncle was not yet gone. Of the fair Leonora I knew little—had never, in point of fact, addressed a single observation to that young lady. But I felt sure that I should like her. I had remarked the beautiful acquiescent disposition of these young people. Moreover, the selection had assumed that character which has immortalised the late Mr. Hobson—Leonora, or nothing. We shook hands (as before), and, subject to the young lady’s approval, the matter was arranged.

Mr. Crowdie was still speaking, when Alice, the invalid, was wheeled into the room. Her father’s voice and manner always, I had noticed, underwent a softening change in the presence of this his favourite child. Kissing her tenderly, he intimated to her the connexion I was about to form with the family, and then, leaving us together, hurried away with his wife to meet Leonora.

I glanced at my companion. The pure and spiritual beauty of her face was marred by an expression of pain.

“I fear you are suffering,” I said.

“In mind, yes,” said Alice, “but not in body. I am, in reality—Heaven be praised for it!—much better.”

“Indeed. Believe me, I rejoice to hear that there is a possibility——”

“I see,” replied Alice, with her bright angelic smile, “that you partake the impression that has gone abroad—that I am deformed. It is not so. Patience and a change of climate are all—so says my doctor—that I need, to regain a certain, if not robust, health. “But it is not of *this* I wish to speak,” she added, hastily. “Oh, Mr. Purkiss, what are you about

to do? Is the human heart a toy, to be passed from hand to hand—given, retaken, crushed perhaps at last—without one compassionate scruple for the treasures of true and abiding love that might have flourished there? I have seen all that has passed. You have a kind, easy—perhaps susceptible, nature. The deference we girls have been accustomed to pay to our parents’ wishes, and our fond attachment to each other, have co-operated with this, and led to much of what has occurred. You have scarcely seen Leonora, never spoken to her. In spite of a cold temperament, she is a good, sweet girl, and you may doubtless win her; but to do so in a manner that would satisfy a generous, kindly nature, will require more time, and a far more delicate procedure, than you seem to consider needful.”

“I accept the censure,” said I, feeling rather ashamed. “I have but to say, in extenuation, that, having lived up to this advanced period of my life, perfectly fancy-free—a fact which somewhat negatives my ‘susceptibility’—I found myself surrounded by so many charms at once, that my judgment became bewildered, and proved unequal to the situation. Now, I see clearly. Ah, that I had had such a monitor before.”

“Nay, it is not too late,” she began, eagerly.

“I know it is not too late; for Leonora, I recal my absurd pretensions. They would be little short of insult. But, oh, in opening my eyes, you have shown me too much for my own peace.”

“What do you mean?”

“Had I known you sooner, your wisdom, your sweetness—oh, if even now——”

“Hush! Mr. Purkiss. You are mad.”

“I have been mad hitherto, but now I am sane—and wretched. See—I am going to leave you; for how can I plead? Why should you believe me? Yet, Alice, I love you—you only. I may never deserve you, sweet angel; but no one else shall ever be my wife. Farewell; and when you hear that I have made another choice, despise—forget me!”

* * *

“My dear Dick.—Are you engaged?”

“Yours impatiently,”

“RICHARD PURKISS.”

(Ans.)

“My dear Uncle. Busily engaged. I have been affianced to eight of your fair friends, and have now to seek your blessing on my union with the beloved *ninth*!

“Your dutiful nephew,

“DICK.”

The marriage-feast passed off admirably. I was not alone in my glory. Sir Hugh Sagramore and Mr. Lowry found brides the same day. Adelaide and the rest were bridesmaids. A diamond bracelet, thirteen laced pocket-handkerchiefs, two fans, and a silver spoon, were mysteriously missed, and as mysteriously restored, at night, to their owners.

My sweet wife and I returned to England

last week. Dear Alice is in perfect health, and little Master Dick is to be christened on Tuesday. We invite you all.

THE ALMOND-TREE.

SPENDTHRIFT of Spring, why in the keen bright air
Thus squander all thy blossoms in the sun?
Thou art too heedless of the swift-winged care
That will o'ertake thee ere the month outrun.
Flowers before leaves? That is not husbandry.
Laugh at sorrow with thy blushing flowers.
Beware, beware! Already in yon cloud
The frost is gathering all its subtle powers.
Be not then still so heedless and so proud,
Lest thou, perchance, some rosy morn in May
(Palsied and trembling with an unseen blight),
Shalt wake and shudder at the cruel day
Of doom, that ends thy pleasure and brings night.
Be wise, beware old Winter's frozen breath,
Thy smiles will not appease the tyrant Death.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XXVII. CONFUSION.

THE cruel furies had now finally entered into that house. Friends, acquaintances, servants particularly, were all coming to the knowledge of there being something wrong. This truth might be gathered from Mr. Tillotson's worn and despairing face. All his friends told him that if he didn't take care "he would break down."

He had but one purpose, which he was carrying out.

About ten days later, Captain Diamond came limping up with a bright face and a sense of importance quite unusual with him. He asked for Mrs. Tillotson, but she was out. Mr. Tillotson was, as usual, in his study. "Egad, that'll do for me as well," said the captain, getting off his high-collared great-coat. "And how have you been, Martha? I declare you are looking as young as you were six years ago. You'll see, Martha, that no one runs away with my third leg. Egad, it's better to me than number two leg!" He then went into the study.

He started back when he saw his friend. "My dear fellow, what have you been doing to yourself? What's all this?"

"Sit down," said the other; "this is very kind of you. I have so few friends now."

"But," said the captain, in real distress, "this isn't the thing at all, at all. Why, you've two pink spots here the size of half-a-crown. Ah, row," added the captain, testily, "this is the old thing again, playing the deuce with yourself. It'll end badly, I tell you. Once you take what they called the green-eyed fellow into your head, it's all gone with you. I could tell you a story of that, about Bouchier, as nice and open-hearted a fellow as ever put on a shako, and who married as elegant a woman as you could pick out. My dear fellow, that young woman loved him as well as you'd love your

father or mother; and Bouchier took it into his head to be jealous of a little major we had, a creature with no harm in him. Ah, but this is one of Tom's long stories. It didn't end well."

"I dare say not," said Mr. Tillotson, gloomily, "neither will this end well. But I have done with explanations; I have only too certain proof. O, Diamond, to think of her, for whom I have suffered so much! To think of her first deceiving me, and then plotting with adventurers to ruin and expose her own husband! I was a fool, and knew very little of life, to think that she would get to love me."

"Folly, folly, folly," said the captain, moving restlessly on his chair. "She dotes on you. I know it. And, as for all these suspicions, I have got something with me that will prove what I say. The fact is, we are going to get that wild scamp out of the country."

Tillotson started.

"Ah, ah!" said the captain, with triumph. "That's something like! Is old Tom the Bojio after that?" Then he proceeded to tell how he had applied to General Cameron and other friends, and how, only last night, he had got an answer from the general, who was "as fine a trump of a man as ever pulled a belt."

"Look here, Tillotson. Just listen to this," said the captain, getting on his spectacles; "she's a true blue;" and the captain read:

"My dear Diamond. I got yours in the country here, where it was sent on to me. I was very glad to see your old handwriting, my dear Tom, and indeed I have not forgotten you or the old Fiftieth days.

"I am very glad you have thought of your old friend Cameron; only I wish to Heaven you'd ask something for yourself, and not—as you always were doing—for some one else.

"Of course, we shall do something for your friend. They are organising a new mounted police force at the island, and we want a dashing savage fellow that has been in the army. From what you say, I dare say your fellow would be just the thing for a captain. The island will give a good salary—eight hundred. So I tell you what. I shall be in town on Monday, and you can come to me at the club and take your bit of dinner, and we'll talk it over, and also the poor fellows that we all knew in the old 'half-hundred' and had such nights with."

"There," said the captain, folding it up. "Think of a high-up fellow like that, in the Bath too, with his aiderkongs about him, recollecting an old spanchelled foosterer in lodgings, like me! Well, let me tell you now. I went off at once, this morning, lame leg and all, to Ross, and saw him too; and faith, didn't he take to it at once? I knew he'd like riding about the country and hunting down the rascals. He's ready to go in a week."

Something like pleasure came into Tillotson's face. "If this be so," he said, "there is some hope. But what will *she* say? Do you suppose she will consent?"

"My dear friend," said the captain, eagerly,

"it's all *her* doing! Planned every bit of it, lock, stock, and barrel. She came to me and proposed it, and we put our heads together, and mapped it all out."

A groan came from Mr. Tillotson. "Ah, exactly. I thought so. It only wanted that."

"My God!" said the captain, aghast, "what's this, now?"

"I see it all!" said the other, excitedly; "a well-contrived scheme, to be sure. How dull of me! Can't you follow? Oh Heaven, heavens! Can't she leave me at once, and go away without torturing me in this way? This is conclusive. But I shall baffle them yet; I shall not be pointed out, or laughed at by the world."

"What are you talking of?"

"Listen. Not three weeks ago, she came to me with a proposal to go off to Italy *by herself*, do you see, for her pleasure or health. Now she proposes that *he* is to go. Don't you follow? Is it not cruel, cruel?"

He seemed to the captain to speak like a frantic man. His hands shook. Light gleamed from his eyes. All the captain's common forms of comfort forsook him, and he sat staring at his friend quite aghast.

"Now I have discovered the plot; thanks to you, my dear friend," continued Mr. Tillotson, pacing up and down furiously; "just in time. Not a word now, as you value my happiness. I shall watch them. This explains everything."

"But what makes you think so?" said the captain.

"Everything," answered the other, fiercely. "*You* cannot know. They have kept me in the dark all this time. She married me under a pretence of liking me; and I was fool enough to trust her! Why, in that desk, this moment, are letters of his; frantic lover's letters, written years ago! They kept all this from me; but they shall keep nothing else. And, worse than that, you know that old business which has been the misery of my life. God knows, I have tried to atone for it; and if penitence and suffering can atone——"

"To be sure—to be sure," said the captain. "You may say *that*, my poor fellow!"

"What do you say to a wife turning herself into a detective, leaguings with ruffians, planning it all, giving them money to buy up my secret from them? And she has it now, knows it all, and taunted me with it the other day."

The captain still could not find a word to say. He was in deep pain and distress, for it seemed to him that his friend was indeed "astray." He saw, too, that it would be useless to make further protest, so he rose to go.

"How hot you are!" he said, as he took his friend's hand; "why, man, you are in a fever."

"You," said the other, bringing him back, "are the only one I can depend on. *You* are true; if I should get ill and become helpless, *you* will watch for me, carefully and jealously, and report everything to me. Mind, I depend on you. For it will be their opportunity."

This was indeed a prophetic precaution. All through that day Mr. Tillotson struggled through an oppressive sense of coming sickness; and,

after a severe battle, was next day struck down by the rising tide of a nervous fever.

CHAPTER XXVIII. MR. TILNEY SERVES THE BANK.

Now began the formalities of a regular sickness. The doctors came, and among them Sir Duncan Dennison, that "tip-top medical man," who was brought by the captain. He shook his head, and pointed to his own forehead. "Bad, bad, my dear captain; therein the mind must minister to itself!" To which the captain listened as if they were talismans of gold, assented with an eager "O yes, of course, doctor;" though they seemed mysterious and unintelligible. But though suffering and for a time in danger, the patient fought a strong battle by force of will, and fought off the enervating influences of his malady with indomitable energy. At times his senses were stolen away.

Then Mrs. Tillotson, a faithful but impassive nurse, heard strange speeches from him, in which her name was mixed up, and the words "cruel," "faithless," "heartless," and with much self-accusation as being "betrayed," and the most miserable of men. She went through her duties faithfully, was the most assiduous of nurses, but with cold impassiveness, and almost sternness.

The friends of Mr. Tillotson came frequently, seriously concerned for his state. Mr. Tilney often dropped in and sat in a great arm-chair down in the drawing-room, sometimes refreshing himself from a decanter of sherry, and sometimes turning the chair into a pulpit, saying that man's life was but a Valley of the Shadow, that here we were yesterday, and to-day there we were down upon our backs like infants. There was our poor friend up there, like a flower. With this train of reflection stimulated by other resources, Mr. Tilney began to think he was contributing essentially to the restoration of the patient. "We are pulling him through," he would say, in his arm-chair.

The captain was far more practical, as, indeed, Mrs. Tillotson found. Once or twice Ross came, but was not admitted, chiefly by Diamond's firmness, who heard the angry voice in the hall, and went down himself to meet him. Indeed, the captain seemed to have an influence over him which no one else had; always meeting him with a good common sense and a manly independence which awed him.

After one of these interviews, the captain came in to Mrs. Tillotson. To that lady, indeed, he was a little cold and distant of late—a distinction she remarked at once. The captain came to her with a sort of apology. "You know," said he, "he—poor Tillotson—so charged me to see that he did not come in, and I promised him, you know, on my book-oath. You know, my dear, it doesn't *do* while he's sick; and, indeed, now, if you would take an old fellow's advice, you would just have done for good and all with this fellow Ross, and send him to the right about at once."

The golden-haired girl looked at him with cold blue eyes. "So, you have caught this tone," she said, sadly. "They have told *you*

the story. Well, the difference is not much, nor shall it be for long."

"No, no," said the captain, in eager protest, "nothing of the kind; only I was so sorry to see things going in this poor sort of way. It's a miserable state of things."

"It is," said she; "but it is none of my doing. Some miserable spirit has come between him and me. I shall do my duty now, as I always *have* done by him. But after he is restored to health and strength, it shall all end. I cannot endure this treatment—these suspicions—when I am conscious of having done no wrong. I have friends, thank God, who will receive me. I have tried everything, even to the surmounting of what few women would have surmounted. Suppose, indeed, I were the injured one. But, as I say, it must all end now. I see it is hopeless to combat what is on his mind."

The captain was aghast, and could not say a word.

She went on: "I know what I owe to myself and to my dignity. I am secure in the knowledge of my own faith and honour. I should not condescend to comply with that cruel order not to speak to that poor outcast, Ross. While my husband is ill, I shall be all he wishes; but when he is restored, he has no title to expect that I should be so harsh and unkind. I *cannot* do it!"

The captain was amazed. He had never heard her speak in that independent style before.

Grainger, too, came at times, and Mrs. Tillotson received him with kindness. "I have been seeing Ross," he said, "and keeping him quiet. He shall not trouble you, don't be afraid. I have talked to him again and again, and I think he rather looks forward to the prospect of going out into this wild life, if he would only take care of himself. But at this moment he is leading a strange existence, and, I suppose, will kill himself ultimately. However, that we can't control. I hope, if I can be of the slightest profit, you will make use of me."

Still Tillotson mended slowly. His wife watched over him night and day. His hot fierce eyes followed her about the room, uncertain who she was. Sometimes his faint voice called her over to him, and in a whisper he said, "I depend on you, Martha. Do not let her out of your sight. I know what she is planning. It is cruel, isn't it? It is she who has reduced me to this. Promise me. Watch her, Martha; put everything down; never let her out of your sight till I get well. Then I can watch for myself."

During this illness of Mr. Tillotson's, which lasted for some weeks, the bank seemed to be proceeding to yet greater prosperity. Its shares were quoted at higher and higher premiums. This prosperity—there could be no mistake—was all owing to the great Lackson, whose influence at the board since Mr. Tillotson's illness had become much more felt. His advice was always put forward with many apologies, and in a deprecatory way. He had his own con-

cerns to look after, which he said were enough for any one's head; but he could not bear to "see money lying in the street at his feet, and not pick it up." Part of this windfall was that project of the Universal Railway Roofing Company, whose contract for the Central Railways was now signed, and sealed, and "brought out." Concessions for roofing in other gigantic works had already been granted. The wretched foreigners wanted money—wanted energy—wanted everything, in fact, that the British capital would supply them with. Lucky Roofing Company! More lucky Fancier Company that "brought out" the Roofing Company! And still more fortunate Lackson, disinterested too, who had generously "put in the way" of the Fancier one of the best jobs known on the Stock Exchange! Mr. Lackson commented forcibly on each successful stage of the undertaking. "Our good friend Tillotson," he said, "would have been against all this. Not that I blame his caution. I think he was right in looking at the matter as he did; but if we had gone on in his way, we should have been left behind, high and dry. The difference is between a beggarly five per cent, which is really not worth picking up, and twenty-five. We shall work the thing up to that yet, or my name is not Lackson. I say, how surprised our poor sick friend will be when he recovers, and finds us twenty per cent better than when he went to bed!"

The members of the board went about with an open complacency, rubbing their hands at having got such "a good thing." The great Lackson promised, indeed, to put them up to many "a good thing" before he was "done with them." Their old rival was furious at this known success; but the old rival's secretary, looking out sharply, pooh-poohed and pished the whole affair, and kept saying, "Only wait!"

Shares in the New Roofing Company were to be allotted by a certain day. Not a single application, it was sternly hinted, would be entertained after that day, even from Majesty itself. When this work was done, men went about cruelly bewailing themselves as if they had been treated with injustice. They had asked for five hundred, and been "put off" with two hundred; they had applied for five thousand shares, and had been "fobbed off" with one thousand. The grand speculator, with his hand in his breeches-pocket, made a contemptuous protest against the high-handed behaviour of the great Lackson. The fellow was losing his head, he said.

The success of the Fancier was the more remarkable, as at this season there was the crash of earthquakes going on among many financial undertakings. Some of them were standing in the morning, new, fresh, brilliant, and by the setting sun were only a heap of ruins. When a great tower fell, it had a fatal influence that spread far and wide, and the shock shattered innumerable little banking cottages miles away up and down the country. But the great Fancier towered above them all; and this extraordinary luck was the more remarkable, as trade was much disturbed, and strikes were being medi-

tated in the coal-fields, and even in the iron-works.

Meanwhile, Ross came again and again. Once he burst into the parlour, and insisted on seeing the captain.

"What do they keep me out for?" he said, furiously. "Am I a housebreaker? Do they think I shall steal all the furniture? Well, how's our sick man?"

"O, he's doing well," said the captain. "Sir Duncan says he'll be round again in a fortnight. But I tell you what, my friend, you should be packing up now. His excellency is not a man to stand shilly-shallying. And, if you're not up to time, I can tell you—"

"Ah, Diamond," said the other, "I know all that. I've seen his excellency, as you call him. Would you have me go away when a dear friend is in this state? Dear Tillotson, eh? I don't bear him malice, poor devil! But that poor girl up-stairs, what's to become of her? I dare say he suffers enough—more than I wish him. I declare, this moment, if it would be any ease or comfort to him, I'd just walk up to his bedside and put out my hand to him. I would, though you don't think so."

"Not to be thought of for a moment," said the captain, in some alarm. "As for his dying, that's all over. He's mending every hour, God be thanked! Sir Duncan says he'll be out driving about in a week."

"He will, will he?" said Ross, starting up; "and beginning his old game, I suppose. No doubt. With all my heart, then. I am not sorry. Let him live as long as he can; but I'll be even with him yet. What's this tyranny," he said, with sudden anger, "keeping me from seeing her? Are we all children? Am I not going away? What's at the bottom of it? What are you all afraid of?"

"Yes," said the captain, gravely, "you have given your promise, as a man of honour, to go. I am bound for you myself."

"And who says I *would* go back from what I say? I am longing to have the whipping and scourging of those savages. What a policeman I shall make! I shall put by money, come back in four or five years, and then we shall see what will become of this sham-sick Tillotson? I have seen the general. But I am not obliged to rush off to the train, and break my neck getting down to Southampton. There's lots of time yet. As for going without seeing *her*, that I will not."

"Well," said the captain, "you'll do splendidly yet, for you have 'go' in you, and will come home one of these days a tip-top fellow—with lots of money, too."

"Ah, *that* I will," he said, fiercely, "you may depend on it. I'll come back one of these days and pay off all whom I owe anything to, splendidly. I'll scrape and hoard, and live decently and orderly, and even reform, sir, all for *that*. You may depend on me. I'm to fix the time for sailing to-day. I hope he'll live and get strong, and last

out a few years, all for *that*." Then, suddenly changing his voice, he said, softly, "Ah! this is all ranting and raving, I suppose. I have only a fortnight or ten days before me to stay in old England. So now, captain, don't be harassing a poor outcast devil with watchings and spyings. I *must* see her. I shall not see her for years, I can tell you. There are very few fellows would be as moderate and well behaved as I am. So, now, don't be stiff and pitiless. I'm down enough, God knows!"

The captain was moved. "Keep up, my man," he said. "It will all do well yet. Though, as to seeing *her*, that's entirely for herself. But she'll do whatever is right, depend on it. Give me your hand, my dear lad, and keep up."

Meanwhile, Mr. Tillotson had been mending slowly. The Queen's physician—always an amateur of fine women—took Mrs. Tillotson's hand in his, and said:

"Don't worry yourself, my dear, any more. He is over it all."

"There is no danger—no chance of returning danger?" asked the golden-haired lady.

"Not in the least. He'll be stronger than he was. I'll be down with him at the bank, and get him to allot me some shares before a very few days are over."

Mrs. Tillotson, cold, unflagging in her duty night and day, never relaxed in her work. It had come to one evening, when she was sitting below in her drawing-room, after Sir Duncan had gone, who had said that the patient might be "sitting up" in three or four days. It was dark, and growing darker, and she had sat on in her favourite attitude, her round face leant upon her hand, in a deep reverie. Was she thinking of the course she would adopt for her future life, when things fell back to their old position? Suddenly she heard a heavy step behind her, and some one entered hastily. Though it was dark, she knew the voice.

"Ada," he said, sadly, "well, it has come at last. I have to go now, and have come to say good-bye. That woman would not let me in. But I was determined—"

She listened without speaking for a moment.

"And when is this?" she asked. "When must you go?"

"To-morrow night," he said, flinging himself into a chair. "Down to Southampton. Well, they have driven me out at last, you see. I suppose they'll consider me beaten. Yet, if I had stayed here longer, I must have rotted away or starved. And now, what do you mean to do? I am doing this for *you*, to let you enjoy peace and domestic happiness with him."

She sighed.

"Yes, it is for the best," she said. "You will grow wiser and more subdued, and govern yourself. In time you will forget all the past. You have made me happy by this wise resolve. It would have ended miserably if you had stayed."

"Ah, but," said he, with sudden ferocity, "don't be too sure that it won't yet. I am only going for a time—a few years. I have forgotten nothing, and shall forget nothing. I shall return; and if I hear a breath, a whisper,

of that man's treating you with unkindness, no matter how great the distance, as sure as I am alive, if I have strength to crawl, I'll come over and punish *that* man."

"Hush!" said she, looking round in alarm; "this is the old insanity; but I have hope and confidence, and can forgive these wild bursts."

"Ah, that's what *you* call them," he said, bitterly; "that's your name and your work too. Whatever I turn out, and if I end badly and violently, which I know I shall, you were the beginning and are the end of it. You deceived and betrayed me."

"I?" she said, trembling.

"Yes, you," he said. "I might have been one of your steady model decent citizens, but for you. You were mine, and pledged to me from the beginning. I looked on you as mine; but you sold yourself, as many a woman has done before—was bought with his banking money; and a man that has left me this" (pointing to his scar), "before God, I'll come back and reckon with him. O Ada, how I have loved you all this time! and I tell you this one thing, you shall be mine yet, one of these days."

"No, no," she said, in the same mournful voice; "we have each our lot, and must go through it. All that is over now; it has come too late."

"As the tree falls, eh? Nothing of the kind. You were not born to be miserable, to be chained to that man—a wretch," he continued, with growing excitement, "that if his history were once known, the common police would enter the house and drag him away to a jail. It's true, by Heaven!"

Trembling again, and with a faltering voice, she said, "I do not want to know these things. He is my husband. Only because you are going away do I dare listen to you."

"What prevents me?" continued the other, pacing up and down furiously. "Better men than he have been dragged from a fever to a prison. Only you, and you alone, Ada, have kept me from this. I was thinking over it nights and nights ago. Nothing kept me but *you*, my poor sweet sacrificed Ada. O, you will never know how I have loved you. Under all my rudeness and roughness, which you could not understand, I did, indeed, love you; only my wretched pride would not let me show it. But what is that to you now? And how can you so patiently put up with this miserable man, whom you should learn to despise? who is beneath you morally, whom it is not fit you should stay with——" He paused.

"It is my lot—it is my duty," she answered, calmly. "This is the last time we meet, so you can speak as you will; but you know me well enough by this time to be aware that I am not moved by such things. We must part now; and if I am responsible (as I believe I am, through a fatal mistake) for these troubles, you will forgive me, and I shall pray for you, and we shall look forward to happier days."

At that moment the servant came in with a lamp, and a letter to Mr. Tillotson, which he set down before her. She opened it mechanically,

as she had latterly done his letters—saw that it was headed "Foncier Bank," like a hundred such circulars and notices of board meetings, as had come regularly within the last fortnight or three weeks. She threw it from her. "Good-bye, dearest Ross," she said, with infinite tenderness; "I have reason, indeed, to ask your forgiveness. Cease to think of me; look forward to a new and bright future, and I shall pray every day for your happiness."

Ross looked at her a moment, and then caught her in his arms. He held her there long. She was powerless to free herself. "I cannot go," he said; "I shall not go. I cannot leave you here; or, if I do, I shall end miserably; do something desperate. It is *you* who have brought me to this."

She gave him one sad look, freed herself, and had fled from the room.

"Wait! Stay!" he called after her, in an agony, "a moment;" but she was gone. He was pacing up and down in a fury. "Come back! come back!" he cried; "I can't lose you. Curse on him that has done all this cruel work! I shall be even with him yet for all this, and before I go, too, if I could find any way." And he looked round and round the room as if for a victim.

The cheery voice of Mr. Tilney was now heard at the door. "Ross here?" he cried. "Well, well; it seems we are doing well upstairs—right well. I am very glad of it. It should be a lesson to you, my boy. When you have once anchored your hope up there in a sure and certain immortality, you are—you are," added Mr. Tilney, embarrassed by forgetting what followed, "you are—all right."

Ross scarcely heard him. "I shall be even with him yet," he was muttering.

"What's this?" said Mr. Tilney, taking up the Foncier Secretary's letter, "something from my old bank. Dear me, the days when I was a director, and signing cheques like wildfire. I come and help *her* in all these business matters. What can girls know?" Mr. Tilney got out his spectacles and prepared to read.

Sitting down in the arm-chair, and reading this document, with Ross pacing round the room, Mr. Tilney broke out suddenly in agitation: "My goodness! Heaven above us! What is all this?—involved in the most helpless manner! Salvation depends on not a whisper escaping. Burn this——" And Mr. Tilney, with his glasses dropping helplessly from his nose, could only turn the letter upside down, and say incoherently the words, "Providence," "Shape our ends," "Sparrow falls."

Ross had caught the words; in a second had twitched the letter from him; in a second more had read it with gleaming eyes through to the end; and while Mr. Tilney was gasping and muttering his devout common-places, had, with a stamp and a cry of triumph, rushed away.

CHAPTER XXIX. THE FONCIER TOTTERS.

IN the full rush and flush of its prosperity, with its shares at eight or ten per cent premium, the Foncier seemed to deserve the envy with which its happy course was followed.

The great Lackson was now virtually acting chairman, not by force of election, but by the more powerful moral influence of success and personal ability. The shareholders said to each other that, after all, it was lucky enough that Tillotson and the "slow-coach" policy had been shelved for a time. The great Lackson himself, still modest and utterly unexecuted, now and again threw out hints about a new El Dorado that would all but dazzle their financial eyes—something to which the Roofing Company was a mere faltering rushlight. *That* was a mere experiment. They were only feeling their way. The ultimate end that he saw was universal *absorption*—a gradual but gentle devouring of every existing institution of the sort. His colleagues were fretted and goaded by these gorgeous glimpses, and at last one day he was prevailed on to hint at a scheme for a great Persian Bank concession from the Shah; diamonds and rich stuffs, and all the costly wares of the East, to be taken as securities; loans to the Shah and to the emirs on their personal security. The whole thing was in train; but before this splendid scheme was matured, some other events were to occur.

There had been disputes between masters and workmen in the iron country which had now gone on for some time without settlement, until at last it came to the usual issue—a strike. This began with a mine or two, and a foundry or two; but was spreading slowly. The first mine-owner and the first foundry-proprietor were beaten in the struggle, and had given in; which was only a bonus held out to the others, and soon the whole trade was on strike.

The secretary of the old company, looking with rage and jealousy on the progress of the Foncier, saw what profit was to be made of the affair, and began to whisper. How would the Roofing Company, or rather the Foncier, for it was the same thing, carry out their contract *now*? The contract was signed long ago, a given time fixed, and not an ounce of iron bought yet! In a few days other people began to make the same remarks.

When the directors met the great Lackson, he only smiled at them. Just what he anticipated. His agents were at work, he said, buying up shares hard and fast. Let the fools sell. In a week the strike would be over; up would go their shares, and who would be holding them then? This view was all very well, but it did not reassure the men of business. The hard-headed old cashier and deputy manager, who had been in banks all his life, and who had always looked grave at the "dashing" proceedings of the great Lackson, told some of the directors privately, that he had made inquiries, and that the great Lackson's agent had not bought a single share of the Roofing Company, nay, that he had been eagerly offering them for sale. In financial operations, a feather, the weight even of a bank-note, becomes a stronger and more substantial argument than premises carried out to most logical and irrefragable conclusion. The rumour, whispered diligently and sent abroad by designing persons that the Foncier and

the Roofing Company were virtually one, being financially bone of each other's bone, had begun to be accepted generally; and one day it was found that the shares of the great Foncier were beginning to fall slowly, first to a less pleasing premium, then to par, and then to discount. These were indeed evil days for the gorgeous tabernacle—for "Middle-age Jenkinson's" pigeon-holes and sentry-boxes, his arcades and plate-glass, his inverted frigate hulk which did duty as a roof, the mahogany and magnificence within, and for the forty thousand pounds paid for the site.

There was a panic among the directors as if the cholera had come among them, and that day the great Lackson being absent, having caught a heavy cold and lumbago at a grand City dinner, the ancient cashier came with one of his ledgers, and in a calm grave way said he thought it was his duty to call the board's attention to the state of Mr. Lackson's "private account."

For the "good of the bank," it had been found expedient that the great Lackson should draw largely and without restraint, and the board, now looking through his account, were startled by the enormous sums that had been drawn out and "placed" in his name. Latterly, in the unbounded enthusiasm and confidence which the success of the great Lackson had excited, his proposal to bring some of his numerous undertakings into connexion with the bank had been accepted as a favour. Now, in a panic and flutter, though indeed there was no reasonable grounds for immediate danger, it seemed almost certain that there was ruin and dishonesty coming, and the lumbago and heavy cold of this herculean Lackson, who had often boasted that "he never had been ill in his life," was the worst of all the symptoms.

What was to be done? The ancient cashier was shut up with the secretary for two or three hours until it got to five o'clock, and by that hour they had discovered enough to make their suspicions matter of perfect certainty.

What was to be done? Some one had gone to the great Lackson, but could only see his wife at her grand house, who said that Mr. Lackson was very ill indeed, and could not be disturbed. Then they thought of Mr. Tillotson; he could restore order, or at least could give help, and they wrote off a hasty note:

(Private.) Foncier Bank, Five o'clock.

My dear Tillotson. We have been looking into the affairs of the bank, and have made some discoveries which you should know of. I hear you are well enough to see people. I mean to call upon you about nine o'clock to-night, I cannot go into detail here, but I will only say that Lackson seems to have involved us in the most helpless manner. Things, however, I trust, will turn out better. But our whole salvation depends on not a whisper getting abroad until we can see our way. So burn this the instant you have read it. For I hear that Smith is going about shaking his head, and saying things about us. But I need not

caution you. I need not remind you that your fortune stands or falls with ours, that your means are bound up with ours, and that we must all stand or fall together."

This was the letter that Mrs. Tillotson had opened so carelessly, and dismissed as a formal circular for the routine Foncier's meeting. This, alas! was the letter that she had left down on the table when she quitted the room after parting with Ross; and this was the letter on which Ross's furious eyes fell, the perusal of which made him quit the room with triumph.

Late that night arrived the secretary, anxious and feverish. Could he see Mr. Tillotson? He had made an appointment by letter. It was about the bank. But Mr. Tillotson was worse, could not see any one, especially on business. The doctor had given strict orders. Well, then, could he see Mrs. Tillotson?

Mrs. Tillotson came down with pale and compressed lips. She had indeed gone to her husband shortly after Ross had left. "Now," she said to herself, "all is at an end, happily. I shall go through what is my duty to the very end. Now that poor Ross is gone it will be easier, and he will have no cause for complaint."

On the stairs she met that grim servant, Martha Malcolm, coming down from Mr. Tillotson's room, who gave her one of her hard stony looks, that latterly reached almost to disrespect. Mrs. Tillotson had now begun to have an instinct that this woman had been watching and spying upon her.

Mr. Tillotson was sitting in his chair, weak and helpless; but his eyes seemed fiery, and glared at his wife as she entered. "What is it now?" he said. "Do you wish for anything?"

"Nothing," she answered, calmly. "I came to see how you were, and to read to you."

He almost laughed. "To read to me? I do not deserve all this devotion. No, indeed. How am I? You can see I am as well or as ill as people can desire. You can take back that news, my dear, to those who will be most concerned to hear it. I shall be ill very, very long, I fear, and so shall tax your patience; but it must end, you know, eventually. But then an illness and seclusion has its advantages for others. Yet I shall make an effort to-morrow, and get up and go about and look after my own house. Yes, I shall, if I am to die in the attempt, since there are those so cruel, and heartless, and deceptive, as to take advantage of my miserable state. Go away, as a favour, do. Leave me now, please. I begin to talk so oddly. But I am tired, and want rest."

In terror, but with sympathy in her face, she went up to him to soothe him. He half rose as she came near. "Don't, don't," he said. "I don't ask it from you. Keep it for others. Go, go now, as a favour."

He grew so agitated, that, with a sigh, she went away softly. Listening a moment at the door, she heard him groaning in an agony of mind. "My God," he said, "what are we to do?" Going down, she heard of the bank secretary below, and saw him.

That gentleman was cautious but very pressing. She was equally firm. Mr. Tillotson could not see any one that night. It was as much as his life was worth. The secretary said that the occasion was pressing and serious, and that it was all-important for Mr. Tillotson's own sake. But she was not to be moved. In the morning, then? It was agreed finally that the secretary should come the first thing in the morning, and "then I must really see him, Mrs. Tillotson, or the matter will be serious. I don't like hinting more, even to you."

But in the morning, Mr. Tillotson, having had a wretched tossing night, was infinitely worse. The Queen's physician had been sent for, and had said, "What's all this? I hope you have kept him quiet, and away from anything to disturb his mind?" and his eye settled a little coldly on that "fine woman," Mrs. Tillotson, whom he had several times "had his eye on" when he found Ross lounging insolently about the drawing-room. The bank secretary arrived early, saw the doctor's carriage, and was told the state of the case.

"What is to be done, then, Mrs. Tillotson?" said he. "I may as well tell you now. There is something wrong in our bank. We have been half the night going through the books, and I can only say, that unless we can obtain a very large sum before a few days, and if a breath gets abroad, we may as well close the doors."

She started. "Can this be true?"

"I wrote him all this yesterday," said the secretary. "Of course you saw it?"

"Never," she said. "Yes, there was some letter came from the bank, but I thought it was one of the circulars—"

"He should have seen it at once," said the secretary, impatiently. "I hope it has not been left about. If so much as a whisper got abroad, there would come a rush, and we should be undone. Only a few days' time, and a sum of money to ease present liabilities and anticipate the crash of that miserable Roofing Company, and we are safe."

She ran to the drawing-room to find the letter, but she searched in vain. It was gone. It was indeed far away from that house. The very night that it had been taken away it was read by other eyes. Ross had once, with his friend Grainger, done some business with the rival bank. They had seen the secretary, and been loud in abuse of the Foncier, a strain never unwelcome to the ears of that officer. This had led to a sort of acquaintance; and Ross on this night, talking aloud to himself, exultant, jubilant, had hurried along to that secretary's house, had seen him, and been made welcome.

With the morning the fatal news was abroad. The rival secretary had dined out the night before at a financial dinner-party, and had there, with much mystery and complacency, insinuated his news. Such financial secrets are never told out like vulgar news; they are put in the shape of shrugs and hints. "Bad business, this. You have heard what's going the round, of course. Worst authority, of course. But, putting two and

two together, and once the roofing business gave way, any one could see. Heard about Lackson, their strong man? Not been seen for days; ill, they say, and Tillotson ill too. No wonder."

These hints led to disclosures in a private interview over the claret, between the rival secretary and a great financial chairman, with whom the rival secretary was anxious to stand well. With him he was quite explicit.

"It's all true, Mr. Wick," he said. "Lackson's in America or Norway by this time, and he'll pull them all down." This news was received by the chairman with, "My goodness! seemed always a sound thing. Pity about Lackson, though—a fine head for business. Wish we had him. When he has pulled through all this, we might open to him."

By next morning the town knew the whole story. In the City articles of all the papers were mysterious hints perfectly intelligible to those who were acquainted with the Stock Exchange cabala, and before the bank opened its doors the secretary and officials saw with dismay a crowd of people and a file of carriages waiting to assail them. This they did not care for in itself, but the dangerous significance, and what it portended, was what they dreaded. The truth burst on them. They had been betrayed; or, rather, it was hopeless to keep such a secret as theirs. As for the Roofing Company, that was gone hopelessly, and no one thought of it now. It was a financial corpse, and the sooner the remains were got away and buried, even with indecent haste, the better. But as soon as business began in the Money Market, it was evident that a panic had set in about the stock of the GREAT FONCIER COMPANY.

These were ghastly times for the Foncier Bank, a flutter, hurried meetings, more hurried investigations, proposals for "winding up," for prosecution, for investigation. There were meetings of angry shareholders, and a leading article in the great journal, pointing the moral and showing us all what we were to learn from the instance of the Foncier collapse. The gorgeous building—the masterpiece of "Middle-age Jenkinson"—stood there desolate and closed; and even its finery and magnificence gave it an air like the jewellery on a thief or pickpocket.

While this convulsion was going on, Mr. Tillotson, utterly unconscious of the wreck, was mending again slowly. It was more by a mental effort. There was an eager vitality about him which made him triumph over sickness. But Mrs. Tillotson he motioned from his room with flashing eyes. When he spoke, he said gently, "Don't come to me. You will only expose yourself to danger. Don't let us be acting any longer; and when I get well, I promise you—"

She would only make a grieved protest, and then begin to sit lonely and solitary below in her drawing-room. In three or four days more Sir Duncan said, "We were doing much better, but must be cautious;" and that morning the

secretary to the bank came, and was allowed to see him. He told Mr. Tillotson the whole story of the late break up. "It will take a long time to set right; for we shall be in a perfect mess of law, and winding up, and references, and the rest. We shan't save a sixpence out of the smash. It is very unlucky; for, if the panic hadn't come, and you'd been on your legs, we'd have pulled through even in spite of the Roofing business, and that schemer, Lackson."

Mr. Tillotson heard all the details with an indifference that seemed amazing to the secretary. "Well, you are wonderful," he said; "a true philosopher; just the man for a chairman. I always— But what made you publish the business when I cautioned you so strongly? 'Pon my word, I believe that was what brought it all about."

"I published nothing," said the other, wearily. "I knew nothing to publish."

"O yes," said the other. "You told that man Ross, or gave him my letter, and he showed it to that churl Marshall, and Marshall lost no time in spreading it abroad. A thorough man of business, that. Out of curiosity, Tillotson; why did you do that?"

"Ross showed it," said Mr. Tillotson, with eyes brightening; "how could he get it?"

"The very point," said the secretary; "how could he get it? I wish," he said, rising, "we could have seen you a week ago. Things would have been all square now. I declare I am quite sorry for the poor old Foncier, and get a squeeze about here whenever I pass it by. Not that it affects me—I have had a dozen offers already, and good ones. Good-bye."

Mr. Tillotson was not listening to him. His eyes were fixed on a point on the wall opposite, in an eager speculation. In a moment he rang the bell. "Send up Martha Malcolm," he said.

That grim attendant came up. "Martha," he said, "I want you to try and recollect something that happened during my illness. Try, now, for it is all-important. Was there any letter came here from the bank about four days ago? Try."

Martha answered, promptly, "There was. I brought it up myself, and gave it to her."

"To her?" he repeated, starting.

"And she opened it and read it, and Mr. Ross was sitting there beside her, and that was the day when what I have told you of already, took place."

When she was gone, he burst into an agony, tossing his arms wildly. "This is *all* clear now. Because I come between her and her love, she thinks she cannot punish me enough. She has got my secret, and she has ruined me. But I shall disappoint them," he said, starting up. "I will make one more struggle. Yet I have no one—no one—to watch for me, to help me. I am alone and abandoned to their mercy."

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A NEW SERIAL STORY,

By THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE TALE OF AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE.

IN SIX WEEKLY PORTIONS. SIXTH PORTION.

CHAPTER XIII.

WEEKS and months had gathered into years, since my sister and her husband went away from England. Anna's life was as varied and adventurous, as mine was monotonous and calm. She wrote to me occasionally, but her letters were brief, and far from frequent. I heard more clear and detailed accounts of her life from Madame de Beauguet than from herself, as long as they remained near Quebec. But soon commenced a series of wanderings and changes, which took my sister and her husband further and further out of our old friend's ken. Things did not prosper with them. That much I could discover to my sorrow. Horace had a heavy burden on his shoulders now, and his health was far from good. Poor little Lily did not outlive her first Canadian winter, and Anna gave birth to three more children, who all, save the youngest, died in early infancy. The surviving little one, a boy, was cherished and watched over by his parents with great anxiety. Madame de Beauguet wrote me that it was piteous to see Anna's trembling apprehension lest he too should be taken from them. Old Mr. Lee had sunk into partial imbecility, and needed tending like a child. All these helpless beings had but Horace to lean on for support. My heart bled for them. Sometimes it seemed intolerable to me that I should be surrounded by all the comforts of my home at the Gable House, while they were facing poverty in a foreign land. But I was not allowed the solace of affording them any help. My uncle from time to time gave me sums of money "to do as I liked with;" and, as those sums were invariably forthcoming whenever there was news of difficulty and struggle from Canada, I did not hesitate to send them to my sister. But poverty and misfortune, far from subduing, seemed but to heighten, her haughty spirit. She sent back my offerings with a cold assurance that they were not needed. I could only forward the money to Madame de Beauguet, and beg her, if she saw them in any sore strait, to offer them assistance as though coming from herself.

Time had been very good to me. I believe I was, in some respects, older than my years. Never very sprightly or vivacious, the great sorrow of my life had sobered what youthful gaiety I once possessed. But though outwardly, perhaps, too staid and quiet for my age, I was not without an inner peace and cheerfulness which seldom deserted me. I suppose the secret of it was the knowledge that I was dear and useful to my uncle, and, perhaps, to others. Ah, Lucy, you can never be quite unhappy, so long as there is left to you one human being to whom your affection is precious. Prize well this inestimable privilege of loving. Love, love, my child, abundantly, ungrudgingly; it shall be given to you again ten thousand-fold.

Mr. Noreliffe was a frequent and welcome guest at the Gable House. My uncle found great pleasure and comfort in his society; and to me he was what he had promised to be—a friend, a brother. Once, since his first offer, he had renewed his proposal; but my earnestness on that occasion convinced him that his suit was hopeless, and he made me a voluntary promise never to address me on the subject again. This promise he kept with the most loyal good faith. "I cannot afford to lose your friendship, Margaret," he said. "I may call you Margaret, may I not? I am so many, many years older than you, my child. I could not bear that there should be any constraint or pain to you in our intercourse, and yet to lose your kind companionship and good will would be very hard to me. Trust me that henceforward you shall never more be pained by a word or look of mine. I will put all that away—bury it in the Red Sea, if you like. That is the place for laying unquiet spirits, is it not? Mine, at all events, shall disturb you no more." As I have said, he was most loyal to his word. By this time, he had come to be intimately acquainted with our family history, and my uncle had acquired the habit of appealing to his judgment on many points. Although his home was still at Beachington, he was much with us. As my uncle said, the Gable House was large enough for three, and it was a charity to come and cheer us as often as he could.

The story of one day's life was, as nearly as possible, the story of all the others in its outward details. The circling seasons melted into one another, and made us change, from time to time, the fireside for the garden. But there was

no stirring event, no exciting incident, to startle us from the calm round of daily life.

One bright June day, we were sitting out in the hayfield, my uncle, Mr. Norcliffe, and I. A wide elm spread its fresh canopy above our heads, there was a sleepy sweetness in the air, and silence had come down on us softly, with the peaceful shadow of the elm-tree. My uncle, leaning back in his garden-chair, had fallen asleep. Mr. Norcliffe lay on the grass, gazing up into the depths of the foliage above us. All at once he looked at me and said in a low voice: "What did you tell me was the date of your last letter from Canada?"

"The third of April. It is time I should hear again."

"Your letter was from Madame de Beau-guet?"

"Yes. It is long since I have had one from Anna. But they are moving about, and at the last accounts were in a wild, half-settled district. It seems very strange to me that Horace should have been driven so from place to place."

"Ay. A rolling stone, you know——"

"But why should it be? It seems to me very hard."

"Margaret," returned Mr. Norcliffe, after a pause, "it is hard; but it does not surprise me. With all your brother-in-law's talent and good will to work, he lacks the mental and physical energy necessary to attain success in such a country as that to which he has gone. He will fight, but hopelessly; and that is not the way to win. When I saw him last, in the streets of Willborough, he looked broken. The heart had gone out of him. I saw it in his gait, in the carriage of his head, in the look of his eyes. Forgive me if I pain you, but you trust me, and I must speak the truth to you."

"I know you will say nothing but what is true and good," I answered; "but I cannot help weeping to think of—of—Anna and the child. It seems too terrible that I cannot help them. Oh, if uncle would but hold out a forgiving hand! From him, Anna would take assistance. Could you not speak to him, Mr. Norcliffe?"

"Heaven knows my readiness to do what I can for your sister, Margaret. But do you not see how much more difficult it is now, than it was before, to appeal to Mr. Gough on her behalf? The sums he has given you, he naturally believes to have been applied to her use. If we confess to him that she has obstinately and implacably refused to receive them, as coming through your hands, will that, think you, soften his heart towards her?"

I was silent.

"However, I will try what I can do. I understand well enough why—though your influence with your uncle is strong on all other points—your pleadings for your sister do not avail to induce him to forgive her."

"Do you? Why?"

He looked at me curiously for a moment.

"Because it was you whom she most wronged, Margaret."

My uncle awoke from his short sleep, and no more was said between Mr. Norcliffe and me at that time. But this was the first of many similar conversations between us. He used his influence with my uncle on Anna's behalf, though without inducing him to take any active step towards reconciliation. At length, however, he prevailed so far as to gain from my uncle a half promise that he would reconsider his will. In the first force of his stern anger against Anna and her husband, he had entirely altered the original distribution of his property, and had left everything absolutely to me, as he had told Mr. Lee. Now he promised Mr. Norcliffe that he would think of making some provision for Anna's child. To her, or to her husband, he steadily refused to bequeath a farthing.

Thus the summer and autumn of that year passed away, and I received no letter from Anna. Our old schoolmistress still wrote with the affectionate fidelity that belonged to her. But she could give only meagre tidings of Anna. Two sad facts were plain to her, she said; that they were struggling with poverty; and that Horace's health was fading beneath the sharp breath of that inclement land. Meanwhile, my uncle spoke to Mr. Norcliffe, from time to time, of altering his will. He would do it. He would think it out clearly. He would set his house in order, before he should be summoned away. He grew quieter and more silent as the year went on, but you could not say more sad. His manner—always kindly—became softer than I had ever known it. Also, he would sit for hours, neither reading nor speaking, but gazing out before him with a look that seemed to contemplate something far, far away. On Christmas Day we had been to church together. It was bitter cold, and he was chilled and numbed when we came home. I mixed him some hot spiced wine after dinner, as my aunt had used to do, and we sat listening to the evening bells in the old fire-lighted room.

"Peace—and—good will," he murmured, softly. "Peace—and—good will. How plainly the bells say it, Madge!"

As if the words had been put into my mouth, and were not my own, I rose and embraced him:

"O, dearest uncle, forgive her, forgive her!"

He put me gently away from him, after a while, and made me no answer. But, when we parted for the night, he kissed and blessed me solemnly, and the last words he spoke to me were:

"Blessed are the peacemakers.—I will try, Madge; I will try."

The sickly flare of a candle in the faint grey wintry daybreak was the first thing that met my eyes when I awoke next morning. The face of the woman who held it in her trembling hand, startled me into complete wakefulness at once.

"Hester, what is the matter?"

"Miss Margaret! Master!"

"Is my uncle ill?"

"O, Miss Margaret! I'm afraid——"

I cannot remember how I reached his room. I have a confused idea of her huddling a great cloak over my shoulders, and of the chilly feeling of the oaken boards to my bare feet. I had hardly made a step across the threshold of my uncle's chamber, when a strong gentle grasp was laid on my arm, and I heard Dr. Dixon's voice, saying:

"One moment, my dear Miss Sedley. Stay one instant to collect your strength."

"Dr. Dixon, let me go to him. He is ill; he wants me. You must not keep me from him!"

"My dear Miss Sedley, believe me, I would not do so, if your presence could be of use or comfort to him. But—be composed, I beseech of you—he——"

I broke from him and advanced to the bed. O, my beloved guardian and benefactor! No passionate tone of the voice he had listened to so often, no loving touch of the hand he had held in his generous protecting clasp, could stir him now. Dead, dead.

I was not unsupported in this heavy hour. Our old doctor was kind and friendly, and Mr. Norcliffe responded with instant promptitude to the hasty summons I sent him. They agreed that some affection of the heart had been the immediate cause of my uncle's death, and that it must have been peaceful and painless. He had passed away in sleep, they believed, for he was lying quite placidly on his undisturbed pillow when they found him in the morning, lifeless and cold. There had been no change made in his will. With the exception of some legacies to the servants, I was left absolute mistress of the property.

"I know," said I to Mr. Norcliffe, "that he meant to make some provision for Anna and her boy. I am thankful to remember now, that his last words to me were words of softening towards Anna."

"I believe as you do, Margaret," said Mr. Norcliffe, "that he so intended. But the alteration has not been made. Whatever portion of your uncle's money goes to Mrs. Lee now, she must receive from your hand."

"I will hold it in trust for her," I answered. And we said no more.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Some one wants you, please, Miss Margaret."

Hester's thin straight form stood in the doorway, and Hester's thin high voice spoke to me. I was sitting, very dreary and forlorn, in the old morning-room. The fire had died down to a dull red; the sky was leaden and lowering; winter was without the house, and grief within. Only yesterday, they had carried away its master, never to return. The last journey across the home threshold had been made; that journey which we must all make some day, and which leaves those who remain behind, so desolate. Mr. Norcliffe was staying with Dr. Dixon, and they had both gone

home, and left me for the evening. I was sitting solitary and sad, as I have said, by the low fire, with a sensation of utter loneliness, and a yearning void in my heart, when I was roused by Hester's, "Some one wants you, please, Miss Margaret."

"Wants me, Hester? Who is it?"

"They asked for master first, please, miss," said Hester, putting her apron to her eyes, "and I said as there was—as there was—was no one here but you."

A tremor in her usually measured tones roused my attention, deadened and dead though all my senses seemed to be, with much crying.

"Who is it, Hester?"

"O, Miss Margaret, would you step into the dining-room, please? I couldn't bring myself to tell her. Will you, please, step into the dining-room?"

I got up and followed her with a confused dizzy feeling, and a strange doubt of my own identity, if I may so express the sensation which I have experienced once or twice on occasions of strong emotion. The dining-parlour was without even the dull fire which burned in the morning-room. Its air struck cold and damp. Some leafless boughs in the garden, bedropped with sleet, tapped like elfin fingers on the window-pane. A woman, dressed in the deepest mourning, was sitting in the arm-chair—my uncle's chair—at the end of the room. She rose up on my entrance. "I want to see my uncle," she said.

"Anna!"

She put out one hand to hold me off, as I rushed towards her, and then I saw that she held a little sleeping child, wrapped in her shawl. "I want to see my uncle. Do you mean to keep me from him?"

"O, Anna, Anna, for your own sake do not speak so harshly. My poor girl, my poor love—too late, too late!"

She staggered, and Hester, who had come with me into the room, made a step forward, as if to relieve her of the child. But she clasped him tighter, and leaned on the chair behind her for support.

"Too late! What do you mean?" I could barely hear the words, her voice was so low and faint.

"Anna, he is dead. He was buried yesterday."

She sank down into the great chair, and the little child rolled from her arm, as its grasp relaxed, on to her knee; but Hester took him and laid him, still half asleep, upon the sofa, while I busied myself with my sister. She had swooned. I called the other women-servants, and by degrees we revived her, and half carried, half supported, her to my own chamber, where we undressed her and laid her on the bed. She resigned herself to our hands, but uttered no word, and her wan face was motionless and rigid. After a time, I sent the others away, and sat by her side, silently watching. A dim light from the shaded lamp fell on her face, and, as I looked at it, it seemed as if the years

had been rolled back like a curtain, and I lived over again that moonlight night, when in that very room I had told Anna of my love. Poor changed pale face! Drawn, and haggard, and aged, how altered from the lovely girlish countenance which had lain on the pillow blooming out of its nest of soft dark curls!

I glanced at the black dress that lay beside the bed, and I read in it all the history of her return.

As I sat gazing on my sister's face, the large dark eyes opened and looked at me.

"I have been very ill, Margaret; at death's door. That is why I am so weak. O, I have suffered much, in mind and body!"

She followed my glance to the black gown, which lay by the bed. "Yes," she said, slowly, in a faint hoarse voice, "I have lost him. I have come home desolate, with my fatherless boy. If it were not for the child, I would pray that this hour might be my last. You think I speak calmly, while you are weeping. How I envy you those tears! Mine are all spent, I think."

She closed her eyes again, and lay silent for a long time. Then her lips moved, and I heard her whisper,

"Margaret, bend down your face to me."

I leaned over her, and touched her cheek with mine. I believe the same recollection rushed into her mind that had been in my own, for, suddenly, she threw her arms around my neck, burying her face upon my breast, and burst into a flood of hysterical tears. I let her weep, holding her in my arms, and speaking no word, until the fit had exhausted itself. The tears eased her heart, and at last she lay, weak but tranquil, holding my hand in hers. Far, far into the night, I sat beside her bed, and listened to the broken story she told at intervals.

"No! Let me speak," she said, when, in consideration of her bodily weakness, I would have urged her to try to sleep: "I cannot rest until I have told you all my misery. You know that we were poor, but you cannot imagine how poor we were. Failure met us at every turn. Horace struggled and suffered bravely, but I know now, and I knew then, that he felt it was all in vain. As long as we remained near Madame de Beauguet and her good husband, things were not so bad. They helped us in a hundred nameless ways. When my poor little Lily lay sick, Margaret, I could not have procured the necessary help for her, if it had not been for our old governess. I know," she added, hastily, "I know what your face says. But I could not take the money from you then. My heart was hardened against you, Margaret, because I knew how much better you were than I, and because I knew that it must be so with him. Every kind act of affection coming from you, stung me; for I thought, in my jealous heart, Horace will love her the better for this."

"O, my sister!"

"Yes, I did. It is the truth. I was poor, ailing, worn. I rose early, and went to rest late, labouring feverishly to help in the daily struggle, with all my feeble strength. I tended the old man—my husband's father—till his

death. I saw my little children, born in sorrow and poverty, fade, and languish, and die. But my wicked, proud spirit was not softened yet."

A spark of the old fire blazed in her eyes as she spoke.

"I could have endured it all and more, without flinching, if he had only been spared to me. But I would not bend, so I was broken—ground into dust by the only blow that could utterly overcome me. Horace, weak in body and weary in spirit, fell into a fever. We were in a wild, almost barbarous, place, helpless—penniless. Then, Margaret, when he was struck down in his youth, and lay on a sick bed, then I was humbled and afraid. I would have gone on my knees before you, to get him the least one of the comforts he needed. We were hundreds of miles away from the only friends who cared for us, on all that vast continent. I wrote to Madame de Beauguet distractedly, imploring her to send me help. The good creature came to me herself."

"God bless her!"

"Amen! God bless her! Yes; she made that long dreadful journey alone, travelling day and night, to reach us. Horace brightened when he saw her, but it was the last flicker of life. He would have our boy, our only surviving child, lifted on to his bed, and he would lie holding the tiny hand in his, and gazing on the wistful face. The little fellow, barely two years old, would sit mute and still, nestling by his father for hours. If we attempted to take him away, he struggled and sobbed until none of us had the heart to remove him. Many times we have waited until he dropped asleep, to carry him to his own little crib. One night I had fallen into an uneasy slumber from exhaustion, and I lay stretched on the floor at the foot of my husband's bed, when, in the dead silence of the night, I was awakened by hearing your name uttered in a loud clear voice. I started to my feet, and saw Horace gazing intently in the direction of the door. 'You are come,' he said, with a smile; 'I knew you would come!' Margaret, before the avenging God, I believe that the anguish I endured at that moment might expiate even the great wrong I did you. 'My own love, my Horace!' I cried, frantically, clasping his poor thin hand, 'don't you know me? Speak to me, my husband, or my heart will break.' His gaze never wavered from the door, but he pressed my hand with a feeble clasp, and whispered, 'Look at Margaret!' and so he died."

"Well! Grief does not kill, for I am here. I lay for six weeks, raving in brain fever, and insensible to everything around me. Our good friend nursed me, and took care of my boy, and fed us, and clothed us, and, when I could be moved, carried us both to her own home near Quebec. And then she urged me to return, and cast myself at uncle's feet, and supplicate for pardon and reconciliation. She spoke firmly and openly to me. She probed my heart, and fearlessly showed me what a wretch I had been, even when I had most gloried in my strength. She told me that it was a duty I owed to my dead

Horace, to confide his boy to the loving care of those who could provide for him. Her counsel prevailed over the last remnant of perverse pride in my broken heart, and I came. If I could but have seen my uncle—if he could but have known how I longed for his pardon and his love, even when I was hardest and worst—but that consolation was not for me. It is just."

"Anna, he loved and forgave you at the last. I know that he dearly loved and fully forgave you. Had he not been taken away so suddenly, he would have shown you by his will, that——"

She laid her hand upon my lips.

"It is better so. I know that my boy and I must owe everything to your generous hand, and I will take your gift from you as though it came from Heaven. I am not what I was. I have been taught in a hard, hard school. It is better so, Margaret, better so."

I have little to add, Lucy. By slow degrees Anna recovered some measure of strength; but she was never more the bright blooming creature she had been once. While she lived, she shared my home, and daily, hourly, made some new return towards the old fondness which had united us as children. The haughty spirit sometimes rose, the wayward temper occasionally broke forth, but never again was there any serious breach between us. Her boy, little Sedley—your father, Lucy—grew and thrived, and was the joy and sunshine of our quiet home. Stock, bedridden and very near the close of his long life, permitted Anna's boy to climb up on a chair to the tall old-fashioned chimney-piece in his room, and to reach down and fill for him his cherished pipe. Such a concession Stock never made before. Many and many a long churchwarden was smashed by falling from the inexperienced little fingers; but Stock resented any attempt to interfere with him.

"Let un be," he would growl out to Hester, who had constituted herself chief nursemaid, and was a little jealous of her authority. "Women-folks knows nought about boys."

"Children should be obedient, Mr. Stock," Hester would retort, sharply.

"Ah! and so should women. Let un be. He'll be all right, I tell ye. He's got more sense in his little curly poll nor some as is more'n twenty times his age. Lord, it's a marvel to see the wisdom o' that child!"

Nor did any number of mishaps, in the filling of a long series of pipes, shake Stock one jot in his conviction that if the "women-folks" would only leave Master Sedley alone, he would infallibly come out triumphant from any possible trial of his skill and wisdom. The child took greatly to me. Sometimes when he came frolicking up to me in his gleeful way, his merry laughter and bright arch glance would make me sad for a season. For it was as if his father's spirit were looking out of his blue-grey eyes. But little Sedley, though he inherited Horace's sweet temper and buoyant disposition, was made of

sterner stuff than his father. He had what poor Uncle Gough used to say Horace wanted—ballast.

You have heard of Mr. Norcliffe from your father. He took my nephew as his pupil, and helped to make him the clever doctor he is now; and the pretty house where you and your brothers and sisters were born, once belonged to him. After my sister's death, I gave up the Gable House, and came to be near Sedley Lee and his young wife. When children gathered round them, and their pleasant house was filled with the sound of fresh young voices, I begged to have you, my godchild, to be as a daughter to me. Your good parents trusted me with their treasure, and their treasure is very dear and precious to my heart.

Anna died with her head upon my breast, and my hand in hers. My name was the last word upon her lips, as it had been on the lips of him whom we both loved so well.

From my chamber window that looks on the sea, I sit and watch the restless striving waves, that rise and fall, and fall and rise again. With very different eyes do I look upon them now, from those of that poor love-lorn girl who saw them through her tears near fifty years ago. The waves toss and leap wildly; but the heart that once beat more wildly than they, is at peace. I look out at the sunset, and think with a thankful spirit that my life is setting, serene and bright, even as the daylight dies brightly in the west. I await the summons to depart, not impatiently—for life has many sweet moments for me—but with hope. The remembrances of my early life, its scenes, persons, and incidents, become, not less but more clear to me as I grow old. And sometimes it is with me, as the German poet has said: "The present and near seem afar off, and that which has disappeared becomes the only reality."

THE END.

WATERLOO AND THE WORKHOUSE.

THE following memoir was not actually written down on paper with pen and ink by the narrator himself, but it is a transcript of notes made during the old man's narration, and is in truth what it professes to be:—the real un-interpolated history of a genuine soldier of the 18th of June, '15, given as nearly as possible in the veteran's own vernacular.

THE RECRUIT.

I was born at Stonesfield, in 1792. My father was a slate-digger. My mother died when I was between three and four years old. That was a bad job o' my side. My mother's father took care of me, on account of my mother's death, to help my father. Father married a second and a third time, and had a family each time. He fetched me away from gran'father when I was 'twixt six and seven. I first recollect myself about seven at school at Stonesfield. We was

very well taught at letter-learning, and I stayed there about three years. Father then took me to work. I worked till I was about fourteen along o' father. At fourteen I worked for myself, and rented my own lodgings; through discord at home.

About seventeen I got acquainted with a young woman, a blacksmith's daughter. We went on very well till I was about nineteen, but it was very disagreeable to her father, and he and her people so druv me about that at last I 'listed for a soldier in the Oxfordshire Militia.

When I went to jine the regiment, she went along wi' me to Oxford. As we was walking down the street, her father got off of a chaise, and she said, "There is my father: I must leave you for the present." He thought I wanted to take her away with me, but I wouldn't have done it, I loved her so. When I got back to my lodgings, the landlady said, "Why, here has been a young woman inquiring for you."

I never saw her again.

When the militia left Oxford we went to Bristol. We stayed there six months, and then went to Portsmouth.

Whilst we lay at Portsmouth, I 'listed into the 95th Rifles, now called the Rifle Brigade. Our colonel then was Colonel Cameron. What a man he was! The captain of my company was Sir James Fullerton. A most excellent man he was. Our men would go through fire and water to serve him. He was made brevet-colonel for his bravery on the plains of Waterloo.

On leaving Portsmouth we went to Shorncliffe in Kent, a beautiful spot. We stayed there, in temporary barracks, and larnt our discipline, and in November we was called upon to accompany the Prince of Orange to Holland.

THE SOLDIER.

We landed in Holland at a place called Albertsluys. The French had a battery at Flushing, and they peppered us at landing. We marched to a village about five miles distant, and the next day was called upon to form the outpickets against Bergen-op-Zoom. On Christmas-eve, 1814, we lay under the walls, and thought the storming was going to take place, but it did not. It was very wet, and we was afraid to speak. We retreated three leagues that night, and went to Rozendaal. We stayed at Oudenbosch till the Frenchmen came out of Rozendaal, and then we was about Antwerp till the 13th of January. On the 13th of January we drove the French pickets, who were plundering in the neighbourhood, back into Antwerp. We filled a church at Maxham, two miles from Antwerp, full of prisoners. We took Antwerp after the second assault. Some of the ships in the Scheldt hoisted Boney's colours; but our general went out, and he told 'em that if they didn't haul 'em down, he'd put 'em to the bottom.

At Antwerp we stayed for about a month, and then marched to Mechlin, where we stayed some time—about nine days—and marched into Brussels on the 1st of May, at three o'clock in

the morning. We afterwards marched back some way towards Antwerp; but the French came down unawares on the 16th of June. Our officers' head-quarters were in Brussels. We had gone out to target practice, giving our shirts to the women to wash, and as soon as we had gone out, the route came for us to go to Waterloo. We soon heard cannonading. Our baggage got entangled. We lay down for two hours in a grinsard close, and then had our orders to fall in. General Adams—a young general he was—came to us with his arm slinged up. "Come on, my boys," he said; "we shall be at it in less than twelve hours."

We continued our march till about four o'clock on the 17th, and then we were in sight of Waterloo plains. A wonderful sight it was! We could hear the report of cannon all about. We was then ordered into a gentleman's paddock. There we killed two cows—killed 'em and ate 'em in two hours. We was then moved on to the forest part of the plains. I remember seeing the Duke of Wellington ride close by us. The Prince of Orange had command of the Belgian troops—they was of little use, *they* was—and as he was a-drawing them up near the wood for shelter, the Duke says, "Do you know who is in the wood? The French. Your men will all be cut to pieces before the morning." We made a move, and marched out into the rye-fields. They was just browning for harvest. It rained in torrents that night; our rifles was half full.

The sun rose beautiful on the eighteenth. We could see the French on a rising bit of ground—a wonderful number of 'em. I heard one of our captains say, "There's a precious lot of 'em; but damn 'em, we shall beat 'em." He didn't get hurt; but his cap was riddled through and through before night.

Our rifles formed the outpost nearest to the French. Part of us was cooking in a garden. We emptied our salt beef and things, and was obliged to go and jine. Our provisions had been taken from us the day before, and we had only one biscuit and half rations of grog in consequence. We had orders to 'quit ourselves like men, and then marched up into the field. Our brigade was ordered to be at the foot of a copse. The French was expected to make a push down there.

I saw Boney on a white horse.

The French didn't come that way, however, and we was called away, after the action had begun, to extend in skirmishing order to protect the squares. Lord Hill led the Light Brigade up three times within pistol-shot of Boney's platform, from which he gave signals by telegraph. The aide-de-camp came to us with orders to take a piece of artillery belonging to the French which had done great damage to us.

"Move on, men," he said.

We took it; but they gave us a shower of grape, and many of our men was killed. *All* our officers was wounded; and we was obliged to borrow one to lead us out of the field. But, thank God, I escaped.

The French went to the right about. We could see the aigle plain as plain. Stout chaps they was. We could see their knapsacks, and then we knowed as they was routed. The Prooshians fired two pieces of cannon, and come and formed two ranks. General Blucher said, "Brave Anglishmen!" and the band played "God save the King!"

We marched through Waterloo, and lay on the rushes that the French had laid on the night before. General Blucher said, "Let the Anglish have two days' rest, and we will follow the French up. So we rested two days on the plains. Louis the Eighteenth passed by us with his staff and his friends, to go to take possession of the throne at Paris. I saw him plain.

I saved two men's lives that day on the field of Waterloo. The first was an Irishman. Ever afterwards he would give me part of anything he had, or all. The second was a Frenchman. After the victory, as we was going by the French cannon, he was set on a gun-carriage with half his foot shot off. A blaguard fellow of ours loaded his rifle, and swore he'd blow his brains out. I said, "For shame; don't hurt the man; his life is as sweet to him as ourn is to us. The victory's gained; why should you be a coward?" Our corporal come up just then, and he said, "Well done," and clapped me on the shoulder. The Frenchman spread out his hands, and cried, "*Merci, merci, monsieur,*" and asked us if we could give him some water, as he was very thirsty. We had nothing to drink ourselves, or would freely have given some to him.

After our rest we marched for Paris. We entered Paris at the beginning of July. The Light Brigade was the first that marched in. We pitched our tents in the Champs Elysées; and we stayed there till November. Our brigade, the artillery, and part of the Tenth Hussars, was all the troops that was quartered inside the city. Two troops of the hussars used to come in every morning to relieve two other troops that used to go out. I recollect well the cricket-matches our officers used to have on the Champs Elysées; it was beautiful! In November we went out, twelve miles from Paris, to take up winter quarters. We stayed there only a fortnight, and then had the route for England. We came home by way of Calais, landed in England at four o'clock in the morning, and went back to Shorncliffe, our old dépôt.

At Shorncliffe I was transferred to Captain George Lewis Gray's company, and was made corporal. I recollect well the Christmas dinner that we had that winter at Shorncliffe. Captain Gray was a most excellent man.

In two or three weeks' time we sailed from Dover for Ireland—uncommon rough it was—and landed at Waterford on the 16th of March, the day before St. Patrick's Day. From Waterford we marched to Dublin, where we lay two years and six weeks. The citizens of Dublin was very fond of our regiment. On leaving Dublin

we went to Birr, in the King's County. Here I finished soldiering, and I will tell you how it came about.

I left the army, not because I disliked soldiering, but because there was something drowed me home. Partly my gran'father, who was getting old; partly the young woman I spoke about just now. Before I left home with the recruiting-party, she went with me into a neighbour's house and took me by the hand, and said she would never marry any one else unless she heard that I was dead. I was anxious to get home; and, as I was only 'listed for seven years, my time—allowing for the two years given us for Waterloo—was up on the 13th of November. I then received my discharge. The colonel, Colonel Duffy, and the sergeant-major, both wished me to stop, although I was half an inch under the standard. But I felt drawed home, and so I left, with a good character, in company with another man, a Welshman, in the middle of November. I wasn't entitled to any pension, because I only 'listed for seven year, and wasn't lucky enough to get a scratch of any kind. Our passage was paid to Bristol, and I reached home early in December, after having been away more than seven years.

I was now twenty-six year old. I found the young woman I spoke about, although she had promised me so faithful, had become entangled with another young man, and was engaged to be married to him. But she was never married to either of us. She was taken ill whilst we was in Ireland, and on the very day that she was to have been married to him, she died. I happened to meet her brother a year or two ago, about '63 or '64 it was, and we was a-talking of her. He said, when she was a-dying she talked of nothing but me.

THE PAUPER.

My gran'father had a slate-quarry. I worked for him for five years, when he became bed-ridden, and soon afterwards died. After that I worked for one man seventeen years, and then for another for eleven years more.

I married in 1824. We had six children; three are alive now, two sons and a daughter, but where they are I don't know. I haven't seen or heard of my sons for years. In 1841 I lost my sight; leastways, lost it so far as I was unable to continue my work. I had been a teacher in the Sunday-school for twelve years, and was obliged to give that up. That was a great grief to me, as I used to love to be among the children. Two years later I lost my wife, and two years further on I lost my eldest daughter. After my wife died, my daughter as is alive now kept my house for ten years, when she was ruined by a young man who had promised to marry her, and got a house ready. She had always been a good girl up till then, but that seemed to throw her quite off her mind, and she didn't seem to care what she did or what became of her. Ever since then she has been a constant grief and trouble to me, and the last I heard of her was that she was in jail, for sleeping out in a cowhouse. After I lost

my sight, I had an allowance from the board [of guardians]—half-a-crown and a loaf a week; but my sight got worse and worse, and I couldn't do anything to earn a trifle; and so, as I couldn't live honest out on half-a-crown and a loaf a week, I came into the workhouse in 1860.

When I first came into the Union I was put into the old men's wards. I thought it a strange place, amongst a parcel of people from all parts. They was then very bad behaved; their conversation was horrid bad, and altogether it was a great trial to me. I don't say as they was worse than me, but their conversation was so different to what I had been accustomed to. I used to go down to work in the stone-pit belonging to the workhouse till the doctor ordered me not to go, as my eyes was so bad he was afraid I should fall in.

The next year I was put into the men's infirmary, where I was orderly-man for three years and a half. My eyesight then became too bad for me to be of any use much; and I have since been sometimes in the infirmary and sometimes in the old men's wards. In the six years I have been in the house I have seen above thirty deaths, I should say, altogether, and always found the dying very grateful for anything I could do for 'em. Many of 'em who used to call me "selfish" [by this word the paupers mean "conceited," "stuck-up," "self-righteous,"] have become very friendly before they died. In particular, one young man, a cripple, who had always been a great enemy to me, begged me that I would take the sacrament with him before he died.

The worst of the workhouse, especially when there is none of us in the ward as can read (and I can't read now, because of my sight), is, that the days are so long and tedious; and the men, having nothing to do, will quarrel and storm so among themselves about nothing. And it's wonderful how jealous everybody is of everybody else. I may say as envy rolls about in great heaps.

We old folks used to have meat for dinner, and tea for supper, every day, till quite lately; but both meat and tea was taken off from me and thirteen more a few months back, and for some time we only had what is called the "house diet." But there has been a new order again, and all of us as is over sixty now get our tea, but not the meat every day as we'd used to do. We now have for breakfast (at half-past six) tea and six ounces of bread; and for supper (at half-past five) we have bread and cheese and tea. For dinner on Sundays and Thursdays, we have soup. I have had a bad rupture (about 1840), and the pea-soup don't agree with me. I don't eat a basin of soup once in a month. On Mondays and Fridays we have cold boiled beef and vegetables; and then I can manage to eat enough to keep me going; but my constitution is gone, and I haven't any appetite. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, we have suet pudding. This I can't manage at all; it is too heavy. When I try to eat it, I have a bad pain in less

than half an hour. So I generally leave it on the table, and anybody has it. I feel I am fast going down hill; but I could eat better, and should suffer less pain, if I could have something lighter to eat. I don't think I've eat an allowance of cheese for three weeks. If I could but have half a pint of beer a day, it would be everything to me. I could do with that and my bread, and should be contented.

I hope I'm as happy as anybody can be in a workhouse; but I never knowed anybody stop in, as could get out. In particular, they are very averse to dying in the house. I recollect one man—a very respectable sort of man he was—saying to me, "If I only knowed the night I was going to die, I'd get over the wall." And he meant it; he never smiled a bit; he was quite serious-like.

The writer asked the poor old man for how much he thought he could get taken care of in his native village, supposing he had the opportunity of ending his days there. He said there were ten or a dozen places where he could be put up for five or six shillings a week. His face brightened at the bare thought, and he broke out ecstatically: "Ah, sir! that would be *too* great happiness. Oh! how glad should I be to have liberty once more! Often and often do I say over to myself the lines (perhaps you may know 'em, sir):

Eager, the soldier meets his desp'rate foe,
With fierce intent to give the fatal blow.
The thing he fights for animates his eye,
Namely, religion and dear *liberty*."

The light faded off his face as he added pathetically, but submissively, "And I'm a prisoner!"

DUTCH HOLIDAYS.

THE first thing which strikes one on coming into Holland is that Holland must have suffered less from the Deluge than any other part of the globe; that, physically speaking, it can have been little changed by that event. To possess an estate in Holland, and expect anything to grow upon it, at first sight appears as if you might as well make an investment in the bottom of the sea, and go down occasionally to look after it. The very people in parts of Holland are like labourers on a submarine estate, and have a seal-like kind of motion when ashore betokening a fishy origin. Goldsmith says that "the sea leans against the land;" he might have said the land leans against the sea, for in certain parts of Holland there are fields and farm-houses several feet below its level. The manner in which the sea is continually being ladled out of Holland is perfectly marvellous; the operation is incessant, and the expense enormous. This raises the price of every article of life, and the value of labour, to a height unequalled in any other continental country. It supplies, moreover, a constant stimulus to industry, for, were

anything to go wrong, or any relaxation in this constant spooning out of the ocean to take place, the whole country would be under water.

The quay at Rotterdam is the most prim, formal-looking promenade possible; nothing is unpainted or out of its place. The very trees, I believe, all come in and go out of leaf together. I suspect that if one contumacious poplar were to take upon itself to wither or remain green, otherwise than at the discreet period at which its brethren undergo these changes, it would be rooted up or be painted the required colour, so as not to make a gap.

Painting is a great business in Holland. Everything is painted and repainted continually throughout its existence. Some cows shuffle off their mortal coil with their horns painted all manner of tasteful colours. "Neat" is the one word which expresses the condition of everything in Holland and Brabant. Everything is neat; houses are neat, streets are neat, people are neat, wines are neat. Most things, too, are made convenient. Everything fits everything else. The ships of the merchant come up to his door, and from his bedroom window, if so disposed, he may take an airing on the foreyard. The barges are painted all sorts of brilliant colours, and occupy the most singular positions in the heart of the largest Dutch cities. When you think yourself close to some public building, a great merchantman preparing to set sail appears right before you, within a few feet of your nose. A Dutch friend, with whom you have been conversing in his counting-house, opens a door, like a press, and you find yourself suddenly on board ship upon the canal. Little mirrors projecting from the windows, whereby all that goes on in the street may be revealed to the fair occupants of the houses, are universal as in Belgium; as also are little feet-warmers, or "voor stoofen," not unlike what the old women carry in Italy. This fire-stove is put under the skirts in the house, and carried in the hands in the street.

The distances are so very short in Holland, that one fancies a traveller might make the giro, as the Italians say, of the whole kingdom between breakfast and dinner, stopping to see the sights at each town en route. Such a rapid tour, however, though it might satisfy the prevalent British idea of "doing" Holland, would convey an inadequate notion of the real objects of interest in that most interesting country.

Going north from Rotterdam, the first station on the railway is renowned Schiedam, which enjoys a reputation similar to Glenlivet in Scotland, or Bushmills in Ireland, being the great distillery of Holland. The next place is Delft, the birthplace of eathenware. Delft received a death-blow from Mr. Wedgwood, who, by his superior taste, demolished the long-prevailing fashion in cups made upon the model of martello towers, with saucers, deep and straight as the sides of a fosse, to match. Close to this is Ryswick, the scene of the famous congress and general peace, so graphically described in the charming pages of Macaulay. A few miles

further on, a large and handsome station, bearing the very uncouth-looking name of S. Gravenhage, greets the eye. It is in reality the Hague. Omnibuses and cabs from the principal hotels are in waiting here. The rapidity with which they drive in the streets of Holland is surprising when one looks at the heavy horses and heavier drivers, and, more than all, at the narrow streets, quite unprotected from the canals, and the sharp turns. In passing the corner of a bridge, the carriage often makes a sudden swoop and whirl which causes the occupant to feel doubtful whether it is the driver's fixed determination to cast him headforemost against the houses on the one side, or into the canal on the other.

The park at the Hague is, in fact, a forest, and a great resort for all classes in fine weather. Many of the trees are fine, and the planting is so close as to suggest even greater extent than the reality. The roads winding through it are, in hot weather, delightfully cool and shady, and on Sundays the whole presents a very gay and animated appearance. Crowds of people, old and young, rich and poor, high and low, repair thither from Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Leyden. A band is stationed on a little island in the middle of a small lake, towards the centre of the forest; and near it is a pavilion, surrounded with innumerable little tables, where ice, coffee, lemonade, or wine may be had. Everybody smokes, talks, laughs, and is amused. At four o'clock the band takes its departure, but a great deal of laughter and merry-making goes on here on summer evenings; hide-and-seek and other primitive diversions being in great favour.

Scheveningen is a great resort of all classes for amusement, on Sundays and fête-days. It is a village on the sea-coast, about three miles from the Hague; thither, if you wish to study character, you go in an omnibus, in company with as many other people as that conveyance can possibly carry. The correct thing is to go upon the roof, for the purpose of seeing the flat country around, and also of being hit occasionally in the face by the branches of the trees which grow along the road. Many of the roads in Holland, this among the number, are paved with little bricks, set on edge and packed closely together. The bricks are small and thin, like those seen in the ancient ruins at Rome, and form an excellent roadway, as quiet as macadam without the dust, and as hard as pavement without the noise. How a trial of this contrivance happens to have been omitted in all our metropolitan experiments with nearly every sort of pavement, it is not easy to understand. Scheveningen itself is a little village, chiefly composed of inns, cafés, and other places of public resort; chairs and tables are placed in the street, and surrounded by large groups of people, all dressed in their gayest attire. The women wear grand caps, quilled and frilled in a style that would do honour to a French milliner. Round the back of the head, underneath the cap, are worn large gold or silver plates, not unlike small helmets, which terminate either in

a sort of gold-wire corkscrew on each side of the face, or in a handsome gold band which runs along the cheek. Considering that the owners of these costly ornaments are the bourgeoisie, it is at first surprising how they come to possess them. They are, in fact, hereditary property descending from mother to daughter.

It may be satisfactory to those who have taken their ideas of Dutch beauty from the pictures of Rubens or his pupils, to know that their representations of large, coarse, clumsy women, with great inexpressive faces, are unpardonable libels on the Dutch fair sex. Nowhere on the continent of Europe have I seen so many pretty faces, and so many fair, delicate complexions, as I saw habitually in my Dutch holidays. It is true that many of the pretty faces are more or less doll-like; but as compared with the mass of other northern nations, the Dutch girls have decidedly the advantage in personal appearance. This observation is intended to apply to what is emphatically termed "the people." The Dutch ladies and gentlemen are extremely English in appearance. The houses, too, are furnished and fitted up in the English manner, and with a degree of comfort (in the English sense of that term) not understood in any other continental country. Large stoves warm the houses in winter, and jalousie blinds exclude the sun in summer.

The general style of living is expensive, and very similar to the English style; Spanish and Madeira wines are much used. As for modes of conveyance, the true genuine mode of transit, as everybody knows, used to be by "treyschuits" (large canal boats which traversed the whole country), and wherein the traveller enjoyed the society of people of every class, from the staatholder to the chimney-sweep. But this pristine mode of conveyance is no longer in fashion; steam has invaded its territory; and the water, which in days of yore floated barges laden with fat burghers and their fatter wives and children, peasant girls, and old women conveying vegetables to market, and gentlemen clad in high-heeled shoes, black shorts, a coat to the knees, and a waistcoat to the thighs, the whole crowned by a three-cocked-hat—the water which had the honour of bearing these revered burdens of a past age, is now ignominiously pumped through a leathern hose, to become steam in the boiler of a locomotive. Skating, too, inseparable in the general mind from Dutch winter life, being surpassed in speed and ease by the railway, is rapidly becoming superseded by it except as an amusement, or when, by reason of snow or the slipperiness of the rails, the trains are unable to run. Young Holland, however, likes it still, and sticks to it; not without reason, in a watery country as level as a billiard-table.

The management of the sluices is perfect and exact. Were, indeed, a few of them to go wrong, the whole kingdom would be under water. The system of drainage in the fields is admirable. Canals or drains are cut transversely as well as parallel, each being propor-

tioned in its width to the quantity of water it is required to carry off.

One important branch of trade, the great herring-fishery, is largely carried on at Scheveningen; as many as from five to six millions of herrings being frequently taken and conveyed in dog-carts to the Hague. The arrival of these fish creates a great sensation, and, in due time, extensive occupation in the way of curing, drying, and otherwise preparing them for export. For considerable quantities, larger carts are employed, shaped on the model of the canals and ditches around, being very wide at the top and very narrow at the bottom. The driver sits upon whatever he can, and drives wherever he likes. A pair of horses pull one of these vehicles along at a rapid pace, and, as it is very large and jolts immensely, its noise is almost equal to that of a couple of pieces of artillery thundering along on their carriages.

The lions of the Hague are (as everybody knows) the Picture Gallery, the Palace, and the Japanese Museum.

The interior of the palace combines elegance with comfort. The rooms are handsomely but plainly and solidly furnished; the curtains are of the richest and heaviest and warmest material, and the carpets feel like moss beneath the feet. They are dark crimson, and of a peculiarly rich soft texture, the manufactory of which is at Utrecht. The glass chandeliers and other similar ornaments are from Maestricht, and the furniture from Amsterdam. Thus the whole furnishing of the palace is executed by Dutch artists, out of Dutch manufactories, and gives employment chiefly to Dutch artisans. The Opera House at the Hague is very small, but prettily and comfortably fitted up. Dutch and French plays are performed on alternate nights. Dutch music can hardly claim a high place.

Leyden, also written Leiden, is pronounced in England as if it were either *Layden* or *Leeden*, both of which pronunciations are wrong; the name being pronounced as if written *Lyden* by those who ought to know best—to wit, the people who live in it. That there are any such people is not the fault of Valdez or his generals during the memorable siege of 1574. Its wonderful and noble defence, and the heroic conduct of Van de Werff, and the Commander Van der Doos, have given Leyden a reputation like that of Saragossa or Sebastopol. Its university, once one of the greatest schools of medicine in Europe, is no longer what it was, but is yet of much eminence. In medicine and natural philosophy, Leyden ranked not less high than did Utrecht as a school of law and political economy. The number of students in the former is about three hundred, and in Utrecht four hundred. Groningen averages also four hundred.

The great organ of Haarlem and the tulip-roots of Haarlem are the only things connected with the place that most of us have ever heard of. The tulip mania has long ceased, but the reputation of the organ subsists unimpaired. It stands in

the cathedral, a large but not handsome building, quaint in construction, and surrounded with low houses. Leaving you in the church, an old sexton goes off to find the organist and his assistant. Their fee amounts to rather more than a guinea—about three and twenty shillings English—but is not by any means too much for the enjoyment which any one with any taste for music must feel in listening to this magnificent instrument. Its swell in some of the fine passages of Handel's music is most magnificent. The Hallelujah Chorus seems as if it had been composed especially for the Haarlem instrument. Next comes the incantation scene from *Der Freischütz*, a wonderful performance. The thunder rolling overhead is imitated so perfectly, that you find it difficult to persuade yourself that a real storm of thunder and lightning is not raging without. I have heard the same music performed on the great organ at Freiburg, in Switzerland, to which, in one respect, I should give the preference. The voice-pipe at Freiburg is clearer and sweeter than that in the Dutch organ; it is, in fact, a closer imitation of the softness and sweetness of the human voice. Many comparisons have been instituted between the relative merits of these two organs and that of Birmingham; the latter, from the vast additions and improvements made in it when that town became the meeting-place for the triennial festival, is now, perhaps, not much inferior to either of the foreign instruments.

With the extraordinary history of the tulip mania a great deal of fiction is, no doubt, mixed up, but it is still amazing after a liberal deduction. In one case, it is related that a landed proprietor gave a furnished country-house, a well-stocked garden, and a couple of cows, for an especially rare root; in another, a carriage, a pair of fine grey horses (and perhaps the coachman and footman into the bargain), were exchanged for a similar treasure. One rich merchant gave his pretty daughter to a penniless man whom he detested—and whom, as a necessary consequence, she dearly loved—to acquire a tulip which no other man had. In another, a cook, having mistaken a precious tulip root for an onion and cooked it accordingly, was seized with such remorse on discovering the mistake, that he instantly committed suicide.

For some probably unknown, and certainly unjust, reason, the word Dutch was once often employed in our language as a term of disparagement. "I'd as soon be a Dutchman," was a frequent phrase. The term "Dutch courage," meaning pugnacity induced by drinking, is equally unjust, for no people ever fought better, and few abuse drink less, than the Hollanders. There is no more respectable nation in the world than the Dutch—using that adjective in its best and truest sense. They have not been engaged in barbarous oppressions or cruel conquests, any more than in bubble-schemes or disreputable projects; though it is true, on the other hand, that they are a nation of Ichabods, whose glory is departed. With the solitary exception of the rich and beautiful island of Java,

nothing now remains to them of their once vast Oriental dominions; all have successively passed into English possession. The Great Cape colony has also fallen into our hands, and one-third only of the rich settlement of Guiana now remains an appendage of the crown of Holland.

The proportion of military to civilians in Holland is the greatest of any country in Europe, being at the rate of one soldier for every fifty-nine inhabitants; that of Great Britain and Ireland is the smallest excepting Portugal, being in the proportion of only one soldier to every hundred and ninety-five civilians. The Dutch national debt presses sorely on the resources of the nation, its capital amounting to twenty-two pounds six shillings and tenpence, and the interest thereon at the rate of fourteen shillings and tenpence per head throughout the state. Next to its half-sister kingdom of Belgium, the population of Holland is greatest—three hundred and nine individuals to the square mile. Although much praiseworthy economy prevails at the Dutch court, the government in itself is the most expensive in Europe, the average contribution of each inhabitant for state purposes being two pounds eight shillings and sevenpence, whilst with us it is two pounds six shillings and one penny per annum.

The public works are of vast extent, and absorb an enormous amount of revenue. In no country but Holland could such a work as the draining of the Lake of Haarlem be undertaken. The language is certainly not euphonious. One would say it has not much to be proud of, either in respect of sound or looks. The words are something between German spoken by an Englishman, and English spoken by a German. For instance: "Is the company (theatrical) good?" "Is de troop goed?" Again, "Bring me the bill." "Bring mig de rekening." "How deep is the river here?" "Hoe diep is hier de rivier?" "How late is it?" "Hoe laat is het?" It is needless to say that the Englishman must be but a dull Englishman who cannot soon master enough of the language for all ordinary purposes. But it should be added that it is by no means indispensable either for travelling or for society, the Dutch—a highly-educated people—speaking English, French, and German almost universally; the first from a liking for us as a nation; the second from the Dutch having been so long under the dominion of France; the last from their vicinity to the most fruitful provinces of Germany, a large portion of whose products finds its way to the ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, whence it is embarked for England, America, and India.

There is no more curious place than Amsterdam. That such a city ever came to be thought of at all, I should place first among the wonders of the world; and that it exists still, I should place second. Everything about it is different from other towns in even Holland, like as all the rest are to each other. Above all things, it looks odd by moonlight, when the stranger is confusedly sensible of there being so

much more water than land all about him, that he feels as if he were treading the spars of a raft rather than the streets of a town.

Amsterdam is of a semicircular form. The roofs of the houses are in general high and pointed, and a balcony usually projects from every window overlooking that favourite prospect, the canal. It contains two hundred and twelve thousand inhabitants, and is built upon piles of wood driven into the bottom of the sea; the whole being regulated by sluices, so as to keep as dry as possible the treacherous soil upon which the town *seems* to rest. Its extreme cleanliness is astonishing, considering the quantity of trade carried on upon its quays, especially in the dirty articles of tallow, hides, fat, and tar, which defile other towns very much, but Amsterdam not at all. Indeed, the busiest Amsterdammers might be shipping eau-de-Cologne all day long, for anything the stranger's nose can detect to the contrary. In the side-streets, or rather canals, certainly some noisome odours do arise; not, however, from dirt, but from stagnant water. But there is less sickness in Holland than in most other European countries. Coughs, colds, rheumatism, and pectoral disorders, are far less common than with us. Nobody seems to be ill in Holland, and no one appears to be ostentatiously rich, and no one appears to be poor.

The prisons of Amsterdam have long had a high reputation, and we have adopted, at Pentonville and elsewhere, most of the simple and ingenious contrivances for sequestering each prisoner, and yet enabling him to communicate, in case of need, with the officers on duty. Every prisoner is set to some trade or employment according to tastes and capabilities, and the result of the labour is sold, the profits being reserved until the prisoner is discharged, when they become his property. The two Orphan Houses, Protestant and Roman Catholic, are well deserving of attention, and the Refuge for superannuated individuals of both sexes is admirably managed. The Spin House is devoted exclusively to female prisoners convicted of trivial offences, and is managed by a board of directors. The Society of Public Welfare, whose labours extend all over Holland, have also a large establishment at Amsterdam.

The worst thing in Holland generally, and at Amsterdam in particular, is the water. Water-curing doctors would fare ill in this country; for the only drinkable water is brought from Utrecht in stone jars, and is made as much of as if it were champagne—to which it was my misfortune to find that it bears not the slightest resemblance.

The hotels are dearer than in expensive England. Hackney carriages, too, are dearer than anywhere else, excepting Vienna. On the whole, Holland may be considered one of the most expensive countries of Europe to live in; the cost of living being not much less than double the cost in Belgium or North Germany, and one-fourth more than in Italy or South Germany. Both the country and the people are extremely agreeable. The court is not bril-

liant, but is respectably kept up; usually in winter at the Hague; occasionally, for a short time, at Amsterdam; in summer, at the Loo. The royal fêtes are well attended, and strangers are hospitably invited to them. Hunting, shooting, skating, and hawking, are the chief amusements; the last is maintained in its pristine glory at the Loo, where matches in falconry annually take place, and where a considerable sum is expended on the breed of hawks, who are attended in their eyries by a large staff of falconers in the service of the king. Races also occasionally take place at the Loo, where horses belonging to English noblemen usually run, together with those belonging to members of the royal family of Holland. The magnificent château lies near the Yssel river, about twenty-five miles north of Arnheim, a little to the left of the great north-eastern route through Deventer to Bremen. Hereabouts (in Guelderland) the canals are by no means so numerous as in the western provinces and the borders of the Brabant. In those parts, a young couple will marry "upon" a boat (as the phrase is), as they would in England "upon" a farm. In this floating home the early years of their married life are passed. They live by sailing from town to town, along the canals, with vegetables, fruits, toys, trinkets, and what not. When a long calm comes, or adverse winds arise, the husband hooks himself on by a rope and girth to the boat, and walks along the canal-bank towing it, his wife steering. When the wind veers to the favourable quarter, he resumes the rudder, his wife resumes her knitting or cooking, and away they sail again. In course of time the boat is found too small for the animated Dutch dolls who begin to make their appearance. So, as a little capital has been made, the boat is sold (probably at a profit also) to another newly-married couple, and the first couple and the Dutch dolls embark in a boat a little larger, and so on for years together. In this quaint and frugal manner some of the great shipowners of Holland began life.

Everything goes by contraries here, as compared with the rest of the world. This is oddly true even of great historical events. The army of Valdez, before Leyden, an inland city, was forced to retreat: not in consequence of any attack on the troops, but because the sea came in and submerged them. Some two centuries later (1794-5), the Dutch fleet at anchor in the Zuyder Zee was captured: not by the French navy, but by a squadron of cavalry and artillery, who galloped across the ice to the frozen-up ships and boarded them. When history supplies us with two such singular facts as an inland army defeated by the sea, and a fleet at anchor captured by horsemen, we may be prepared to find Holland preserving a kindred singularity in every-day life.

Few countries will better repay a visit. The arts, manufactures, habits, manners, and characters of the people, deserve and will repay minute attention; nor do I believe, on looking back to my Dutch holidays, that there exists

any country or people whom we English could, in many respects, imitate with such great advantage to ourselves.

CAMPAIGNING IN THE TYROL.

"If you wish to see something," wrote a friend to me from Garibaldi's head-quarters, "come up directly. Business. No food—no lodging—no horse—no ass—no anything."

Interpreting this last sentence as a salutary warning rather than discouragement, I at once discarded that first step from luxury to starvation, which terminates at Brescia, and there encountered a friend who had received a similar announcement, and was already fortifying himself for the unpromising "front."

"They can't give us rations if they would," he casually remarked. "Their commissariat is at Lonato, and they are at Storo. Fifty miles apart, you see."

I did see that there might be a certain inconvenience in going that distance every day to fetch one's dinner, and therefore acquiesced in the purchase of a cheese, which, previously cool, seemed to break into a profuse perspiration at the idea of going to the front—a mighty sausage whose prevailing element was apparently pomatum—a bottle of imposition denominated "rum," and in every way deserving the name—and a revolver. These refreshments being stowed away in a haversack, our next step was to enter into covenant with the proprietor of a vehicle, obsolete save in Brescia, to be and remain with us at the cost of fifteen francs or liri per day, until it should either break down from natural infirmity, or be forcibly seized for purposes of war. In this, we set forth.

Our driver was a patient and resigned individual, who had outlived all curiosity as to his own future fortunes. When all was ready, he gave his steed the usual "Ah!" and, jogging out at the nearest gate, demanded whither the signors would be driven? Had we mentioned Jerusalem, I am persuaded he would have taken an easterly direction, and never stopped until brought up by the natural obstacles of the way.

As it was, we named Rocca d'Anfo, and—with a halt on the road, to deliver some hospital-stores confided to my care by Gavazzi—reached our goal about eight in the evening.

The little town was in a condition of blockade; hay-carts, commissariat-waggons, artillery-trains, ambulances, were jammed together in a mass so hopeless, that we abandoned our chariot, and made our way into the town on foot. Here, we discovered that the petulance of a mule who had been doubled short up, and as it were broken in two, by the sudden stopping of the cart next before him, had caused the whole imbroglio. Instead of untying this new species of "mule-twist," the bystanders were quarrelling over it. And it required all the authority of a stalwart figure in red shirt and grey capote, who charged, whip in hand, into the heart of the tumult, to restore order and locomotion.

The new comer, in whom we recognised our friend Major W. of the staff, was charged, for that night, with the command of the town, for the purpose of facilitating the passage of military stores. He used his authority to procure us what we had regarded as past hoping for—a lodging for the night. He confirmed the report that the mysterious "something" would certainly come off on the morrow, and advised us to start at dawn.

Along the quiet margin of Lake Ydro, reflecting the green shadows of wooded heights, broken into every imaginable form, past picturesque ruins and ripening vines, that recalled the Rhine, we crossed the bright rushing mountain stream that feeds the lake, and reached Garibaldi's head-quarters by seven in the morning.

Storo, tourists may remember, is a small village, with scant claims to the beautiful, at the entrance of a gorge in the Italian Tyrol, and nestling closely under rocky heights, that rise, almost perpendicularly, about fourteen hundred feet above the valley. Leaving the village, on the one side, the road leads up through the gorge to Tiarno, the vale of Ledro, and Riva. On the other, it takes a westerly sweep, conducting through Condino to the Trentine capital, at which it was supposed to be Garibaldi's object to form a junction with the royal forces, approaching from Venetia.

The enemy, however, were in considerable force upon the mountains; and on the day of our arrival—the sixteenth of July—the general, who had under his orders about twenty-five thousand men, was still detained at Storo, the enemy holding a fort on each of the diverging roads—Ampola, in the gorge, three miles distant, mounting five guns, with a hundred and thirty men—and Ladaro, on the other side, mounting fourteen guns, with a strong garrison, and a supporting force in the mountains. The latter, for the present, was left alone; but Ampola, the capture of which would turn the larger fort, was "wanted." Its time was come, for Garibaldi and his red-frocks must pass through that defile, and two of its guns sweep the narrow road for half a mile.

On the previous day, guns had been, by manual labour, placed on the surrounding crests, and the garrison invited to surrender. They offered to retire.

"That will not suit me," said Garibaldi. "I must have *you*." So the fire opened.

This was the second day of the bombardment, and the "rimbombo" (excellent word) of the guns was echoing among the mountains. But before we could enjoy the spectacle, a circumstance occurred. We were engaged in a leisurely inspection of the town, when a singular whiz, and a little cloud of white dust struck from a wall, close to my friend's head, attracted his attention.

"Now, wouldn't you have said that was a bullet?" he asked, smiling.

The phenomenon was repeated, while faint

and distant detonations completed the resemblance detected by my friend.

If anything were needed to perfect the illusion, it was supplied by a sudden slamming of windows and doors; a darting about of men, women, and children; and the abrupt disappearance, down an archway, of an elderly lady, who had been quietly knitting at a lemonade-stall across the way.

"Giuseppe, O! What is this?" shouted he to our driver, who sauntered into sight, preserving his usual impassive demeanour.

Giuseppe made an effort, and pointed to the adjacent heights, dotted with little puffs of smoke:

"Austrians."

My friend dived into an open doorway, and was, I trust, received with hospitality by the family. The enemy had suddenly shown themselves on the edge of the overhanging rocks, and, extending in a line nearly two miles long, opened a sharp rifle-fire upon the village. Six balls had struck Garibaldi's house, when the general, who had been out on one of his early excursions, was seen approaching in his carriage, and at once attracted the fire. He was propped up with pillows, still suffering from the wound—erroneously termed slight—received at Monte Suello. Bidding his staff and escort ride fifty paces apart, the general drove safely into shelter; not, however (as Colonel Chambers, who rode beside him, informed me), without three balls reaching his carriage.

The neglect of an officer who had been directed by Garibaldi to occupy the heights, led to this incident, which, fortunately, had no ill result. Two companies of the red-shirted beginning to ascend the winding paths, the enemy withdrew.

During the day, our party of amateurs was increased by the arrival of a gentleman who had undertaken to inform the readers of a West-end paper what Garibaldi was doing; and of another, whose somewhat difficult name—Poppliefewowski—we (he being a very good fellow) at once agreed to soften into the "Popular One."

We dined on two fowls, alive and careless but an hour before, and, in a commodious hay-loft, not innocent of flea and rat, resigned ourselves to the coy repose that might be expected in such a lodging.

I was falling asleep for the fifteenth time, when a tall figure stood at my side, a sabre clanked, and a voice muttered:

"Be up at three. Something——"

"All right. But where?"

"I'll call for you." And the phantom vanished, bequeathing us the flavour of a very strong cigar.

We were up at three, but the ghost did not call for us. We waited till five. No spectre. At length we heard that Major W. had taken his sword and revolver, and had gone out hastily at one in the morning. Furthermore, that there was something desperate going forward—somewhere.

"Rather selfish, I think," muttered the Popular One. "Something and somewhere! At all events, the fort cannot walk away. Let's go to Ampola."

Agreed. A weary march—or rather climb, for we had frequently to ascend by a flight of steps cut in the rock—placed us, in about an hour and a half, upon a green plateau, with shrubs here and there of sufficient growth to shield us from the burning sun. Here, we found four nine-pound brass guns, assisted by three others, planted on neighbouring crests, playing upon the contumacious little fort below.

The latter, having much the aspect of a little roadside inn, with the stabling detached, was situated at the bottom of the ravine, in an abrupt angle of the road: forming an excellent target for the round shot and grenades that, every half minute, whistled down the narrow gorge, and struck with unerring exactitude either the fort proper or the fortified barrack in the rear. But no effect was perceptible. As the cloud of smoke and brown dust blew away, the banner of Austria constantly reappeared, defiant as ever. Thrice, indeed, it had been shot away; but it had been as often replaced by the sturdy garrison.

The amusement of watching it soon became monotonous. The fort replied only at long intervals, and an argument in which there is but one disputant is apt to wax wearisome. Below the hill, however, a different scene was enacting. Hoping to reason with the fort with greater effect, a gallant artillery officer had caused a gun to be quietly projected round a jutting angle of the road, within a few hundred paces of the wall, and was about to deliver fire, when a shot from the fortress struck the carriage, dismounted the gun, killed the officer and a corporal, and wounded no less than sixteen men. Loud shouts of "Savonia! Savonia!" "Avanti!" and bugles sounding the advance, covered the mishap; and we, who were unable, from our position, to see precisely what had occurred, imagined that a sudden dash was to be made upon the fort. Next moment, however, the recel was sounded, and all went on as before.

During the firing yesterday, two deserters made their way into the town. They were Venetians, and gave some useful information.

The few prisoners hitherto taken by the volunteers have been treated with much kindness.

"Remember," said Garibaldi, at the commencement of the war, "every Austrian prisoner is my son."*

* In striking contrast, the Conductor of this Journal has received, on very high Italian authority, written assurances that when, at Lissa, Italians, officers and men, were struggling in the water, the Austrians fired on them—officers with revolvers, and men with rifles; That this took place after the Re d'Italia was sunk, and the Palestro blown up; That nine officers from the Re d'Italia, who were on a kind of raft, were thus shot; And that these chivalrous achievements were accompanied with coarse and insulting cries.

In forming his modest household here, at Storo, the general purposely selected the Austrians of the place, and they serve him heart and soul.

The noble chief is not a very good house-keeper, and might sometimes be left without a dinner but for the watchful care of his attached English friends, Colonel and Mrs. Chambers; the latter of whom, in despair at the poverty of the general's larder, insisted on becoming his caterer, and sends him his dinner every day. Fish, fruit, and ice-cream, are his luxuries; but his tastes, as is well known, are simple in the extreme. While he was on board the Ripon, on his way to England, a mighty bill of fare was every morning laid before him. He examined it with great gravity and approval, but it was observed that he invariably made his repast of the dish—whether peas, potatoes, meat, or fish—that happened to be before him.

While staying at Stafford House, Garibaldi, who always rose at five, was summoned to breakfast about ten. He said he had already partaken of that meal. Respectful inquiry was made whether he had had all that he needed? "O yes," he replied; "I had some beer, and there was some bread left last night; I ate him."

Garibaldi's tastes in literature are as simple as in eating. He has a decidedly poetic and imaginative turn, and has written striking fervid poetry. He loves the page of Scott, but also, with a childlike interest that might make fools laugh, but would charm the wise, will dwell upon the adventures of Jack and the Bean-stalk, or suffer himself to be caught in the meshes of one of those thrilling domestic histories which, for a penny, inform us what unimaginable horrors are passing under our noses, without in the least disturbing the polished surface of society.

All sorts of provisions, even bread, were frightfully scarce at head-quarters. I would not be understood as affirming that the two-sous loaf is worth a napoleon; but I do know that some rich but famishing Dives offered the latter sum for one, and that Lazarus refused.

A day or two since, Menotti Garibaldi, whose fine regiment—the Ninth—is encamped forward, invited his English friends out to a pic-nic, warning them (a lady being of the party) that it was likely to be a perfectly "quiet day." There being little else than biseuit and wine in Menotti's camp, the visitors were requested to bring their own provisions. A luncheon—splendid for Storo—was accordingly provided, and the merry party were just sitting down, when a gentle pattering sound was heard, and the rimbombo announced, as Menotti remarked, that the enemy had heard of the picnic and demanded their share. There was a general bustle; the lunch departed, none knew whither; and the "quiet day" filled more than one room in the hospital.

Up to this period, the wounded do not exceed six hundred. It is well there are no more, for, though fighting commenced a month ago, the hospital arrangements are shamefully defective. The medical staff is weak and quite insufficient,

even for the comparatively small number at present requiring aid. We shall see what happened at an emergency. The political jealousies of a set immediately surrounding Garibaldi have destroyed unanimity, marred the method and system of every department, and exposed the sick and wounded to neglect and privation disgraceful to humanity. The ablest medical practitioner in Italy offered his gratuitous services. He was rejected. The "squadri"—parties of four hospital-attendants and a doctor, who volunteer hospital service—offered themselves. The attendants were accepted, but the doctor was rejected. Stores, sent by a generous ladies' committee at Milan for the use of the wretched hospitals in front, which needed every essential, were detained and appropriated by the head of the medical staff, simply because they were addressed to the care of an English lady who does not belong to the "clique" above mentioned—only to the guild of Christian charity. Poor Garibaldi has had worse enemies to contend with, this war, than the Austrians. Bureaucracy—government influence unworthily exercised—false friends, on whom his generous nature relies, but who systematically conceal from him the imperfect condition of matters essential to the welfare of his army and his own honoured name.

"I dream of my wounded," he said yesterday. "Go, C., tell them I ever dream of them."

If, instead of dreaming of *them*, the brave old chief had shot one of their neglecters, a better state of things might have been the result.

One hospital—that of Rocca d'Anfo—free from the bad influences before referred to, and under the charge of an able independent man, Dr. Brandini, was an absolute model of comfort, neatness, and everything that can tend to lessen the gloom of these abodes of suffering. Visiting it, one day, with Mrs. Chambers, the doctor presented us with a mighty pike, taken in the adjacent lake, Ydro. My companion was almost speechless with joy. The general loves fish, and none is to be obtained. We went racing back to Storo, at the imminent hazard of our necks: Mrs. C.'s driver—a sort of bashi-bazouk, covered with remarkable weapons—urging the horse with wild shrieks to its utmost speed. Providentially we arrived without broken bones, and half the pike appeared at the general's four o'clock dinner; the remainder being made into broth for his three o'clock breakfast next morning.

Little Ampola—naughty little Ampola—has been slapped enough, and at ten o'clock to-day (the nineteenth) hung out a white tablecloth, as much as to say that the storm might cease, and she was going to breakfast; a meal she could scarcely have enjoyed of late. The staff, with a very large following for a fort so small, took possession about two, and the civil authorities—that is to say, the writer, the Popular One, the West-end journal, and another distinguished Englishman, whose beard of warmest tint had

procured him the title of *Il Rosso*—entered also.

The execution done by our two thousand shells was not considerable. We had killed one man, and wounded four. They had been ordered to hold out six days, and the fourth day had arrived, when the garrison, who dwelt day and night in the cellage—perhaps driven to madness by the perpetual contemplation of the wine—mutinied, and drank up the whole. After this there remained no alternative, so the commandant surrendered. A salute was fired, and we were proceeding to other demonstrations of joy, when a message from the general suggested that they should be deferred to a worthier occasion, and ordered that the *Garibaldi Hymn* should not be played, nor any other offence offered to the feelings of the prisoners, who were complimented on their gallant defence.

We were very jolly this evening. We had established a sort of mess, presided over by our friend Major W., on whom we chiefly relied for warning of the "something" that was constantly going to happen, but didn't. Upon the *West-end journal*—who was, we noticed with regret, the slave of sensual appetites, liked pepper with his omelette, and was particular about having his bacon dressed—devolved the duty of obtaining provision; "*Il Rosso*," who had a head for finance, kept the accounts—which would never come right; and the *Popular One* rose to the climax of popularity by suddenly, without a word of preparation, producing a huge packet of Russian tea.

Things really did look promising now. Something *was* coming. The capture of Ampola had opened the road to Riva; but would Garibaldi be satisfied with thus turning the fort of Ladaro, on the other road, and leave it untaken in his rear?

From head-quarters it was reported that the general was in higher spirits than he had been for days; that he had issued numerous orders, and would transfer his head-quarters to-morrow, at his favourite hour of three, to Tiarno di Sopra, which, with its sister village, Tiarno di Sotto, were situated five or six miles on the road to Riva. It was known that, at this latter place, the Austrians were posted very strongly; also, that they had considerable forces out upon the mountains, where, familiar with every yard of ground, they were no doubt preparing to render our march to Riva anything but a peaceful promenade.

Among the Garibaldian officers who visited us in the course of the evening, was the gallant Chiassi, colonel of the Fifth Regiment: a fine body, more than four thousand strong, and eager for fight. Chiassi was an intimate friend of my brother's, whom he had visited in England; he remained chatting with us until duty summoned him away to head the march from which he was never to return.

We now ascertained that a flying column, under his command, was to move at once on Riva. It was composed of six companies of his

own regiment, with two battalions of the Seventh, and was to be followed by detachments of the Second and the Ninth (Menotti's). The column marched in high spirits, threading the beautiful vale of Ledro, when, while entering a village, without precautions, at about four in the morning, their band playing, they were suddenly attacked by a force from Riva, estimated at eight thousand, with guns and rockets. The Austrians, occupying the houses, opened a withering fire, and threw the column into irremediable disorder. Nevertheless, they retreated fighting, though with the loss of some of their chief officers and many men. Castillini was slain. The majors Pessina and Martinelli were severely wounded: the latter, in a deplorable state, remaining in the enemy's hands. Poor Chiassi did all that heroic courage could, to show a front to the overwhelming foe. With a sort of presentiment, he had, when the action began, taken the decoration from his breast, and entrusted it to his aide-de-camp, saying:

"This is likely to be a serious business."

While rallying the men, a ball struck him in the side. He was raised up by his aide, assisted by a soldier and a peasant; but, before they had moved many paces, a bullet mortally wounded the soldier, and another so much disabled the aide that he was compelled to quit his hold. Chiassi, who was dying, fell into the hands of the enemy, who robbed him of his watch and purse. An hour and a half later his body was recovered, in a bayonet charge, and brought to Garibaldi, who could not restrain his emotion.

"He died as he lived—a hero," said the general. "It is a beautiful and a glorious end!"

The gallant conduct of the Ninth, under Menotti, to whom great praise is due, enabled the broken troops to regain some order. Ricciotti, in the uniform of a simple private of the Guides, evinced great bravery in this, his first battle; and both the martial brothers had their horses killed under them. The Fifth Regiment lost five hundred prisoners; but three hundred of these escaped under a heavy fire, and such as were unscathed rejoined the remnant of their corps.

By the time that Garibaldi—informed of what was passing—arrived at the scene of action, the enemy had occupied Bezzecca, and were threatening Tiarno di Sotto. The firing was warm. One of the general's escort of Guides had his thigh broken by a fragment of shell; another had his horse killed. The presence of the chief restored some confidence, but there was still much disorder, and, at the moment when I and my friend of the *West-end journal* reached Tiarno, there were symptoms of impending disaster. We were told that the enemy were entering the village. Numbers were hurrying to the rear; many wounded were coming in; and the fact that each of these last was attended by five, six, or seven, sound men, seemed to indicate that affairs in front were not going as smoothly as could be wished. Officers and Guides galloped to and fro, shouting, encouraging, exhorting:

"Forward! forward! We want every man!"

Aware that these panic rumours are not always well founded, we made our way through the retiring groups, and, getting clear of the village, had the battle before us. Bezzecca, about a mile distant, was in possession of the enemy, who was apparently extending his front, so as to occupy the wooded heights that skirt the valley, while two guns on his right commanded the road. The rifle and musketry fire was well sustained, and in every direction our troops were retiring. Among the red-frocks, there was a greater alacrity in this movement than it was pleasant to see; and when our one gun, on the left, hastily limbered up and trotted from its position, while the general's carriage was seen coming swiftly back from the neighbourhood of Bezzecca, the panic was not without excuse.

Garibaldi drew up at the entrance of the village, close to where we stood. He was accompanied by two officers. He was slightly flushed, and the lion face lacked something of its usual serenity as he glanced at the skulkers pouring by.

"Sound! sound!" he said to the buglers. "Send this canaglia to their duty." (The stern contempt with which he rolled out the "canaglia" is indescribable.)

For the first time, the presence of the chief seemed to have lost its spell. It was clearly possible to be a coward under his very eye. The officers, to a man, did their duty. The Guides (whom we had regarded as a rather fresh and pampered body, with a propensity for charging everybody but the foe) galloped about in the fire, and were indefatigable in their efforts to rally the men.

"Avanti! Avanti! Coraggio!" they shouted. "Garibaldi is on the road!"

"Avanti!" was echoed by a despairing captain near me, whose little group of red-shirts was rapidly diminishing. "Avanti, ragazzi! Avanti! Per Dio—sacr-r-amento!"

And on all sides the bugles never ceased sounding the advance.

At this time a regular panic took place in the village; a rush was made for the rearward village, Tiarno di Sopra, in which our carriage and effects were involved; and I missed my companion, the West-end journal, until he emerged in safety, at the close of the action, from the rear of a six-gun battery, which, hurried up to the front, began at this moment to do us good service.

By Garibaldi's orders, two companies of the volunteer Bersaglieri—a picked corps—began to ascend the heights on our left, and soon their long grey line was seen creeping steadily along the sinuous track towards the crests that overlook Bezzecca. To support them, some red-shirts were hastily assembled, and, as soon as they could be convinced that the grey Bersaglieri were indeed "i nostri," our own men, prepared to follow.

A leader was wanted, and the general called for a volunteer. A young officer ran up to his carriage.

"Bravo, bravo, Plantulli!" said Garibaldi, as they hastened away. The general gave the card and pencil, with which he had been writing orders, to his servant on the box, and lay back in the carriage, as if to wait events. He wore to-day, in place of his round black hat, a bright scarlet smoking-cap, embroidered with gold, and it became him well.

Meanwhile, the six-gun battery, under Major Dogliotti, had taken up a position on a grassy slope to the right of the village, and, firing diagonally across the valley, opened a terrible fire upon Bezzecca, setting it on fire, and completely arresting the advance of the enemy on that side. The scene at this time was extremely beautiful among the smooth lawn-like slopes and cultivated fields of the vale of Ledro; the smoke of the burning village, the roar of shells, the rushing, shouting, bugling, and the throngs of wounded making painful progress to the rear, presenting a strange contrast to the pastoral quiet and beauty that reigned beyond the narrowing limits of the strife. A bright mountain stream sparkled through the valley, and, although the approach to it was by a slip of white road still crossed by the enemy's rifle-fire, over which no one seemed disposed to pass—"except on business"—it was impossible to resist the temptation to drink. Several poor wounded fellows were slaking their thirst there, to one of whom (shot through the thigh, and bleeding freely) my brandy-flask imparted a little strength.

By this time, affairs had assumed a different aspect. The steady advance of the Bersaglieri, and the splendid practice of Dogliotti's battery (regulars), cleared the left of the valley, and allowed some reinforcements to be passed across to the right. A rush was then made with the bayonet on the village. It was carried, and the battle ended.

The nature of the ground concealed some of the distressing sights that usually attend such a contest. The Austrians carried off all their dead and wounded, but left thirty prisoners in our hands. Forty or fifty Italian dead lay on or near the road, and many more were hidden by the thick brushwood, in which, while skirmishing, they had sought cover. I passed a fine artilleryman lying feet upward on a grassy slope—his head completely gone. Three young volunteers lay dead at the angle of a wall—where they had, perhaps, sought refuge from the shell, which had nevertheless found them. The wounded lay thick about the village. Our loss, as near as could be guessed, was about a hundred and twenty slain, four hundred and seventy wounded, and two hundred prisoners. The brave artillery suffered some loss. Out of the detachment of sixty which have hitherto accompanied Garibaldi, five have been killed, and twenty-five wounded.

The loss in officers was disproportionately great; not only had they been compelled to expose themselves to unusual danger, but the too marked distinction of dress had pointed them out to the sharp eyes of the trained Bohemian

troops and Tyrolese jägers, to whom our raw and boyish levies had been opposed.

Captain Bezzi, twice condemned to death by Austrian tribunals, received a ball in the ankle, shattering the bone, in one of the desperate conflicts of the morning, when retreat became inevitable. Canzio, the general's son-in-law, went up to him.

"You are a brave man, Bezzi," he said, "and your character is sufficiently known. Take you charge of the retreat. I remain."

Bezzi refused; but ultimately finding his men falling fast, with no hope of retrieving the day, yielded to necessity.

Our friend Major W. hearing of his wound, and unwilling that he should remain so near his implacable foes (though repulsed), ordered his carriage and brought him safely to Tiarno.

To describe the scenes at the hospitals improvised at the church and other buildings of the two Tiaros, would demand a stronger pen than mine. The injuries inflicted by the shells and the terrible jäger bullets were more than usually severe, yet only one or two of the boasted medical staff were to be found. Their chief was far away. There were no ambulances, no bandages, no lint, no food, and very many of the wounded received not the slightest notice or relief for many weary hours. Two kind ladies, who accompanied head-quarters, Mrs. Chambers and Madame Cibaleri (wife of the chief of the telegraphic staff), tore up their very dresses and linen to bind the wounds, and the parish priest of Tiarno di Sotto—though no friend to our general—bestirred himself nobly to provide whatever was most needed. In half an hour, he had the greater part of his flock engaged in preparing lint, bandages, and broth, for the sufferers that crowded the church.

The fortitude of the young soldiers was astonishing. No matter how severe their hurts—except in the agony of probing, or of amputation (for, of course, no chloroform had been supplied)—not a groan or exclamation was to be heard. For many hours, the tramp of bearers, and the low murmurs of the hospital attendants, were the only sounds audible.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XXX. THE BEGINNING OF A WEARY NIGHT.

AFTER the conference with Martha about the fatal letter from the bank, Mr. Tillotson thought a good deal, and suddenly the faithful trusting image of Captain Diamond came limping to his friend's bedroom. He was greatly shocked at the alteration in Tillotson's face; the worn wasted look, and, at the same time, the quick feverish fire that was in it. But wishing to give comfort, as usual, he protested that he never saw a man "who had plucked up so well."

Mr. Tillotson shook his head sadly. "You

have heard, of course," he said, "of the bank. It has half ruined me—not that I mind that. There are other things that are wearing me down. You are my friend, the only one I have left now, and you will promise to stand by me now. May I rely on you?"

"Indeed, yes," said the captain, warmly, "that you may, my boy—heart, soul, body, and bones, and the old leg, too, such as it is! I wish I could do more, Tillotson; but I know there is a hundred or so at home, and fifty that Tom McMurdo has, and I dare say, with the pay as security——"

"No, no, my dear captain," said the other, gratefully, "not that. You are too good. We have plenty left. You can help me in another way—much more important."

Then he began to tell the story of his certainties, his suspicions, all in detail—the letter, the discovery of his private history. It was so circumstantial and so convincing that the good captain stood aghast, and had not a protest to make.

"Egad, Tillotson," he said, ruefully, "I don't know what to say."

"But I tell you what we must do," said the other. "I rely on you, on you only. Promise me. Think of me, a miserable, dying, abandoned man, with a faithless wife—O Heaven, how I have loved her, and love her now!—plotting and plotting to destroy me. But I can't look on. I owe something to my own dignity—I *can't* let it go further. I must save her still—save her in spite of herself. Then I can die in peace."

"Save her?" said the captain, wondering.

"Yes, save her. Don't you see to what all this points? That Ross—she says he is gone. I know better. He is not on shipboard yet. The vessel does not sail till to-morrow night. We must watch her, and I rely on you. Don't desert me."

The captain, full of deep pity, promised with all his heart and soul, and went away to be back in "a short half hour." And thus set in a strange and most eventful day. No one was guilty, no one was in fault; but all seemed hurried on by some piteous misunderstanding, and it did seem as though the old Greek "necessity"—that cruel fate—was revived again, and working out all the mischief of this unhappy day. It had set in a dark iron-toned day, gloomy and chilling, with an east wind flying round corners like steel arrows. Many an ancient chest was pierced on that day, and went home charged with miserable coughs and asthma.

There is no need to dwell very long on its details. The captain returned even more promptly than he had promised. In the drawing-room, a little to his embarrassment, he met Mrs. Tillotson. "I am coming to stay with our invalid for the day. Tom's poor company enough, Heaven knows! But he likes it, poor fellow."

Mrs. Tillotson, still sitting in a reverie, with her hand to her pale face, answered coldly,

"Ah, I know. I understand. He does not care to see me. However, in this life there are ends for all things, which are sure to come. When this illness has passed away, we shall see."

"Well, now," said the captain, gravely, "to say the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, all this is a sore pity. It is, indeed. It's a heart-breaking business, and it's all—all from a little foolishness—nothing short of it. No, indeed. Though I must say Tillotson has done his best all through, poor fellow. After all, my dear, what's his sin, except in liking you from the very bottom of his heart, as I can take my book-oath to before any magistrate? And, after all, it was very well when a girl, and all that. But now that Ross is going, or as good as going—"

She rose, and almost averted the captain with her stately look. "So you have joined in it!" she said. "I thought *you* were better and kinder. No matter. What can I expect? I am prepared for everything. But you must not ask me to listen to this. Let those who suspect justify themselves, and use all the means that suspicion uses. I disdain to say a word in explanation, nor alter my course in the slightest. I have some dignity, to which I owe this."

She left him. The captain was in a mystery of wonder and puzzle. "Egad! she spoke like a novel," he said. "And her dignity, too! My goodness! Women, the creatures! I never was or could be up to them. But it's a pitiful case altogether. Yet she spoke very fair; on my word and credit she did." Then he went up and joined his friend.

That day dragged on slowly. It grew almost dark, and the east wind still came with more fierceness round the corners. Stout and strong old gentlemen found their faces contorted as they felt themselves pierced through and through, and that night covered over the fire. It was a miserable day for young and old.

About four o'clock Mrs. Tillotson's carriage came to the door, according to custom. She had been sitting the whole day in a dismal dream or reverie. Then, from pride, she determined to go through her usual routine of life, make no change whatever, and so went up-stairs to dress. She came down a sad statue, floated out, and drove away.

Now were the lamps lighted in the street. The air had grown more steel-coloured. Yet, according to her mechanical routine, which she disdained to alter, she went into the Park, and drove round and round. What was she thinking of in that drive? Of cruel suspicions, where she had been only too faithful and devoted, and where *she*, if the whole truth were but known, had reason to feel injured? Or was she thinking of Ross, the outcast, whose ship was lying in the dock, and was to put to sea to-morrow, and whom she was never to see again? Defiant when she felt innocent, she disdained concealment, and a letter of hers to him—a farewell one, which she had promised to write—was lying on the hall table, unconcealed,

left there to be posted. Above, the invalid and his friend sat by the fire, and now scarcely spoke in the darkness. At last the captain went away.

About five o'clock came a ring at the door, and Martha Malcolm opened it to that Mr. Grainger who used to come there. He said, hurriedly, he wished to see Mrs. Tillotson on very important business—must see her at once. Where was she, then? The grim servant told him with a sort of alacrity where he was likely to find her, and he hurried away. Then she got her own shawl and bonnet, and herself posted out in the same direction.

She got to the Park. She had not to wait long. There were but few carriages there, and she soon recognised the Tillotson Brougham. Mrs. Tillotson sunk back in her reverie with dejection in her fine face. In a moment, Martha saw Mr. Grainger at the carriage window.

"I beg your pardon for this," he said, cagerly; "but I have just been to the house, and followed you here. Don't be alarmed, but a serious thing has just happened."

"To whom?" she said, in a flutter.

"I was going down myself to-night," he said, "to see poor Ross, when this telegram reached me. There is no light to read it. But I can give you the substance. He says he was set on by some American last night about the docks and beaten. Poor, poor fellow! I know what all that means; it was some quarrel that he cannot keep out of. And then he says—these are his own words—'Give her this message: tell her, if I could see her before I die, which I dare say I shall before morning, it would make me very happy. Implore her to come to me, for I have much to tell her. But I know she dare not do it.'"

"Now," said Grainger, "I can speak with more knowledge than he has. I believe that, conscious of there being nothing but humanity in the case, you *do* dare to do it. Am I right?"

"Poor, poor Ross!" she answered, in an agony of sympathy. "I knew it would come to this in the end. What am I to do? Yes, I do dare to do it."

"Then, if so," he said, speaking very hurriedly, and looking at his watch, "there is not a second to be lost. There is not twenty-five minutes to catch the train. There is no time to go home. You can go to-night, and be up again early in the morning. Shall I tell you what to do? Write, write; here is a slip—write to your husband, and tell him the true state of the case without concealment. When the dying call us, there can be no absurd scruples. I shall not go with you, for fear of any remark. Or suppose we drive to the next stationer's; you can write there, and I will take it to your husband, and tell him how it is. Recollect, it is a dying man calls for you—calls you to his bedside."

It seemed noble, and a work of charity. A strange enthusiasm came and filled her. After a second's deliberation, "Yes," she said, "I will go."

She got in, and they drove away to the stationer's. Martha Malcolm was standing there, and saw it all. Then turned and went home. As the stationer was about shutting up, a lady and gentleman entered, called hurriedly for pen and paper, and the lady wrote a hasty letter.

"We may send away the Brougham," said the gentleman, "and take a cab. The servants have enough to talk of without these things. Recollect, charity and the dying! You will have scruples on the journey, but reassure yourself with those words. Now I shall take charge of this, and promise to deliver it at the house in half an hour. You will be there in two or three hours at most. Good-bye, Mrs. Tillotson. God speed you for this generous action. Wait. This is an awful night. You will be destroyed with the cold. Here is a shawl-shop. We can get something here—rugs and everything."

At the South-Western station, the express was all but ready. Already the bell had rung. There was the dropping musketry of closing doors; the engine was dripping dew, and blowing off white clouds; the station-master was looking up and down, when a lady came fluttering through the doorway, quite against the regulations, for the door had been shut. But that gorgeous gold hair and that piteous and most musical soft face were not to be resisted by mortal porter, still less the temptation that was forced into his hand. In a second, a carriage door was opened, the lady was put in, and the Southampton night-express had rumbled out, as if it were kicking and pawing the ground, into the night and the very heart of the bitter east wind.

Mr. Grainger, faithful to his engagement, went straight to Mr. Tillotson's house. He asked to see the master, was refused, and then handed to Martha Malcolm the hastily written letter. It was not sealed; it was not in an envelope. She took it. She herself had only come in a minute before. When he was gone, she opened it, thought for a few moments, read it, and then, with one of her grim smiles, tore it up.

For an hour later there was silence in the house, and Mrs. Tillotson had not returned. Towards seven, Martha Malcolm went up to Mr. Tillotson with some light refecton, such as he made a feint of taking, and told him—it was not her duty?—that Mrs. Tillotson had not come home. A flush came into the pale face, and the thin hands pressed the ends of his chair as he heard this news. But he was unable to speak.

"And the carriage," Martha went on, "has come home without her."

Mr. Tillotson half rose. "Come home without her—her?" he repeated.

"Come home without her. Yes. Come without her. I knew it would end in this way from the day that you married her. I said it, and it has come true."

"But she will return?" he gasped.

She shook her head. "No; she has left you. I knew she would. She thought no one was watching her. She sent away the carriage,

and took a cab. But I followed her, and took another. She is gone."

"You followed her," he almost gasped, "and where? Tell me at once. No concealment, woman."

Martha Malcolm paused a moment, then lifted her long fingers, and pointed as if in the direction of the town. "Down to Southampton."

For a long time he lay there in his chair half stunned by this news, then gradually recovered. Martha was gone. He passed his hand over his forehead; and then, quick as lightning, a resolution flashed into his mind. "She has abandoned me. But I shall try and save her yet."

CHAPTER XXXI. A LONG NIGHT.

WHEN Mr. Tillotson found himself on the platform of the railway, it seemed all deserted and dismal. The lights were half down; the huge arching—which hung in the air, and appeared to gather clouds in its recesses—seemed like the vaulting of a huge cave, and to hold awful mysteries in its iron waves. Only a large clock, with a great ghastly dial, on which played a concealed lamp, and which looked as if held out by a stiff straight arm from the wall, told the hour with an unwearied brilliance, showing Mr. Tillotson that it was now past one. The place was deserted. The lines of rails went off, away into darkness. The lines of carriages—funereal, and not glistening now—went off away into darkness too, and seemed like endless strings of mourning-coaches laid up in ordinary. All up through this vast archway—which seemed now like a huge tube—swept the cutting night winds at intervals; and, passing through Mr. Tillotson's frame, made him shrink and cower.

Yet he was not conscious of it. This was but a physical instinct. A strong porter came by, and he asked him about the next train for the seaport. It was, indeed, the same station to which he had come on the day of his gloomy departure from St. Alans. And this thought came back on him at the moment. He thought of his state of mind *then* almost with a smile—a smile of despair. Foolish, frantic, twisted yarn of follies that go to make up what is called man! And this porter was actually the "intelligent" man who on the same day had done the honours of the place to our captain.

The porter entered into the spirit of what was asked of him. The mail, of course—the express—even the night-luggage—every train was gone; there would not be another until six to-morrow. By-and-by there would be a "packet train" in, and that was what *they* were waiting for. And then they could get home to their beds.

Mr. Tillotson was almost stunned by this news. And with the news up came a shower of sharp stinging Minnie bullets from the dark end of the cave, and swept through him once more. The porter drew his jacket about him.

"Them sort of showers go through a feller like a knife," he said. "Stand in here, sir, out of the blast." And he opened a waiting-room and raised the gas. (A huge gloomy apartment, with clouds settling over the other end, where there were the sepulchral refreshment counters.)

"What am I to do?" said Mr. Tillotson, calmly. "I *must* get down to-night. Is there no way? A special train?"

The man shook his head. "Too late, sir. Stokers all gone—superintendent a-bed. Why, not three weeks ago, there was a feller come running in at this very hour a-screeching for a special. His wife was a-dying. And he put a real hundredpun-note down there on that table—I saw it with my own eyes—and our people could do nothing for *him*."

"But this," said Mr. Tillotson, passionately, "is worse than any one dying. I *must* get down to-night. You do not know what depends on it. Here!"—he was appealing to the true source of sympathy and invention with a liberality that the porter had not experienced in his life—"find out some way—think of something. Help me! Where does this superintendent live? We are losing most precious moments."

The man had his finger to his forehead in a second. (Perhaps the unfortunate whose wife was dying had not appealed in the same way.) "Wait—wait, sir. You stay there. Ah! there's Walker. Here, Walker."

Walker was a railway policeman passing by carelessly outside. To him the porter—still not forgetting to muffle his jacket up about his chest—went out. They had a long consultation. And in the ghostly refreshment-room Mr. Tillotson sat and waited calmly. Walker and the porter both came in together.

"I have it, sir," said the porter. "There's the packet train that will be in here in half an hour, or less, and th' engine must go back to the works, thirty mile off. And I tell you what, sir, I'll just run up and see the superintendent. He's as likely not to be gone to bed."

"Sure not," said the policeman.

"And he won't mind sending it on to the junction—only twenty mile forward. (It will all go into the night's work.) And then you can pick up the express. The very thing; nothing could be nicer."

The policeman said it fitted to a T, and in a moment the porter had gone.

In a few minutes the up packet train was signalled. Porters came dropping out of niches and corners, like rabbits creeping out of burrows. A bell rang; the dim lights all suddenly flashed up, and in a moment the cave was all ablaze. Down, afar off, ruby-coloured moons were flashing in the air, and changing into moons of the regular tint; and presently there was a rumbling and a hollow roaring, and a white cloud of steam, and the packet train came in.

It was a very dwindled packet train—not more than two or three carriages. For, as the

guard told one of the porters as he came on to the platform, "it was a tearing night at sea," and only a few had come over.

In a few moments more the porter had returned with the superintendent, who had *not* gone to bed, and who, in truth, when he had seen Mr. Tillotson's card, which was very well known, had come with alacrity.

"To be sure; nothing could be easier. Here, this carriage might stay on, and go down with the engine."

It was like a good-natured host ordering out a horse and chaise for his guests. And in a very few moments the sleepless telegraph was working, and the horse, after a short mash of water and coke, was put in front quite fresh and brisk, and was cantering out in the volumes of dark clouds, which had by this time set in again, and made his hoofs echo gaily on the ground. In a lonely, sad-coloured blue carriage, with a sickly lamp above his head (it had burnt all the way up from the packet over the heads of sick passengers), Mr. Tillotson sat.

What were his meditations during these weary half hours? Rather, what were the pictures that seemed to grow out of the dull blue cushions before him? The sense of utter blankness and calm misery, and the crash and tumbling of many castles. His whole life lay there before him—a sudden heap of ruins. Every motion was leading him towards that scene whence one glimpse of happiness had flashed so long ago; and even on that blue back ground he made out the spire and towers of the old cathedral, lying in tranquil serenity; and from its long and graceful windows could hear that sad music floating, touched by fingers that he had once—This made his heart shrink up and ache; and he put his hand before his eyes to brush away these old cruel dreams.

There was now a light or two swooping by, like stray meteors, and a slackening—one or two more lights, and a halt; while a conversation went on. This was the "works." No doubt an explanation was in progress with the engine ostlers, who were perhaps surprised at not having to take away their horse to his stables. Then they went on again; and the dull blue cloth gradually began once more to break out into fresh pictures.

Yet Mr. Tillotson was wonderfully calm. Of late, the gradual and cruel frustration of all his hopes—the slow sweeping away of the dream of happiness that he had fondly thought had come true—prepared him for this blow. Only at times—as he thought that he might be too late, and that he would never arrive to save her from herself and from the certain misery which this wretched step must bring with it—the flying engine seemed to crawl, and the cold gripe of despair seemed to close upon his heart; and he had to rise and walk about his prison to waken out of his dream. As for himself, he was now so dulled, so hopeless, and almost so resigned, that he had accepted

his miserable condition, and only thought of the one aim.

Again more lights were flitting by. They were coming to the junction. The junction was very dark, for they only lit up for their regular visitors. Here upon another lonely platform—a station that was in its nightcap and very drowsy—Mr. Tillotson stepped out into the chill air; and the tired horse that had brought him at last went off gaily to his stable—his night's work done.

For about a quarter of an hour Mr. Tillotson paced that lonely platform. He thought that the miserable express would never come up. Here, too, the sore winds were raging, and stabbing him pitilessly in his chest, in his back, through and through, on all sides, so cruelly, that it occurred to him for the first time that it was folly not to have brought some wraps. But the next moment he was smiling at himself for thinking of such things; and, indeed, he was disturbed by a faint shriek in the distance. The express *was* come at last.

Now a porter or two, who had been asleep on a bench by the fire, came angrily out, rubbing their eyes. They resented this disturbance. Up it came—a mass of pale sickly light and blue chambers, with not half a dozen passengers, and a general air of a dream. It seemed to bring drowsiness in with it, as it glided up by the platform. Mr. Tillotson was put into one of the blue chambers—he could have had his choice of half a dozen lonely ones—and they went on again straight into the night.

It was a long, long journey. He never slept, for his eyes were visited with a strange and watchful wakefulness. The night seemed to have no end; and the darkness, and the ceaseless burr, and the sharp rattle of musketry as they swept through an open station, and the stray and flashing lights, no end. When he looked back later to that night, he turned his eyes away; for it seemed to him the longest and weariest he had ever known in his long and weary life, and he had lain awake many, many nights. But here at last was a cold and ragged blue streak—a jagged rent far away; and already the sickly lamp was burning pale.

It ended at last. In the steady cold of morning, the train rolled into the station far down to the south-west, where the seaport was. Another great pale clock-face, held out from the wall, showed that the hour was four. Into that cold morning light came the figure of Mr. Tillotson; but a figure so shrunk and wasted and aged by that night's work, that a bright porter, fresh from his good night's rest, pointed him out with pity to a friend of the same cloth. But they did not notice how brightly his eyes were burning, for he felt now that he had got so far over the difficulties of his pursuit, and might yet be in time to save her. That was the cry always sounding in his ears, with the hoarse monotonous jangling of a fog-bell. "Save her!" The porter who had noticed him was eagerly offering his services,

though a little damped by hearing that there was "no luggage."

Now the sun had begun to shine, and Mr. Tillotson stood there at the door of the station, unconsciously shivering, and mechanically thinking where he should go to, or what he should do. Alas! the great seaport was a huge place, with docks which seemed overgrown with forests of shipping. Where should he begin? The prospect was one of despair. The porter came to him again. Was he expectin' any one? Did he wish for a cab? Could he do anything? Mr. Tillotson saw that he was intelligent; and recollecting what good service the other porter had done for him, told him his difficulties. The porter *was* very intelligent, and grasped the whole in a moment.

"Exactly, sir," said he. "Know the very party. Lady came in last night by the half-past eleven train. Yeller hair, and a gent with her. Couldn't see *his* face; he kept back so."

"The very pair," said Mr. Tillotson, eagerly; and yet he was feeling the gripe closing upon his heart again. "Find them for me—make them out—lose not a moment, for they may be gone even now—and you shall be taken care of. Where did they go to?"

"Ah, bless you, sir," said the other, "there's the point. Where did the cab go to? You see, in this place, we don't take down the numbers as they do up yonder. We'd never find that cab. Maybe he's down now at the docks, or up at the Factories. I tell you what, though, sir. If I might make so bold, you should go straight to a hotel—the Royal Albion—and lie down and take your sleep, for you don't look well, and leave the rest to me. I'll go round *all* the 'o-tels, and find 'em out—"

"But they will be gone," said he, distractedly; "there is a vessel to sail; what time does she go? They will be gone if we are not quick."

"Lord bless you, there are vessels going from this place every half-hour."

"But this one is bound for Australia," said Mr. Tillotson, eagerly.

"Ah, that's better," said the other. "But, bless you, they're going too. You can't count 'em. Now take my advice, sir, and make for the Albion, and I'll hunt them up, it they're in the town."

It did indeed seem the best advice. Tillotson's head was swimming, and he had a deep, thick oppression on his chest, which almost prevented his speaking. The "gashes" left by the cruel winds which had been stabbing him all the way so mercilessly, were still raw. Yet, thank Heaven, here was the smiling day at last, and that long night, with the sickly lamp and the blue cushions which seemed like a week of long, long nights, was now far behind.

He took the advice offered to him, and went straight to the Royal Albion. They almost hesitated about taking in the wan, worn gentleman, who seemed to have almost death in his face, and who came without luggage—which was a more serious consideration. But the landlady, who came out after the landlord, was

a humane and gentle woman. Her husband saw the well-filled purse with which Mr. Tillotson's trembling fingers were busy, and so he was taken in. He all but tottered to a great white room, that seemed all plaster of Paris (it was a new hotel, finished but six months ago), and at last lay down upon a great bed, with eyes that felt starting and staring up to meet the white ceiling overhead, countless cog-wheels went whirring and buzzing round in his brain, and the drone of the night journey was at his ear.

"Better try and get a good sleep, sir," said the humane landlady, as she shut the door, "and you'll be all right in an hour or so."

Try to sleep! Kind advice; but his eyes seemed as tight and hard as steel. The good landlady was below, taking thought with herself how she should send up at the proper time a "nice" hot breakfast, which the "poor gentleman," who had something on his mind, would enjoy with relish, after he had had his sleep—say about twelve or one o'clock. But the "poor gentleman" was still on his back, with steel bands tightening across his chest, with strong wakeful eyes, and he would leap up and rush to the window at the sound of every cab or carriage. Thus the minutes and the half-hours were slipping away. At last he could endure it no longer, and, hardly able to lift his head, he went down. The humane lady protested against his going out, not at least until he had had something warm; but he would not wait, and went forth.

It was a bright, sunny, almost gay day, and everything looked cheerful. The streets were crowded; many passed by him as he stood on the steps, all busy—some serious, many laughing: a husband and wife—young, whispering and enjoying some secret joke; a father and daughter; a business man smiling to himself.

He wandered on listlessly. He got out of the busier streets, and saw the sun glistening on the water. He was close to the Docks; and here were the solid masses of granite and heavy gates, and heavier waggons rolling slowly through the heavy gates behind a string of monster horses, and past men with golden legends on shining glazed hats. Over the great walls that joined the heavy gates he could see the great thick plantations of masts, crowded like a jungle. The sun was strong, and beat down on his forehead, and at moments he felt as if he could have sunk down there on the pavement; but a curious instinct carried him on. Fortunately it was so, for as he waited at a crossing with his head swimming round, and almost inclined to catch at the lamp-post, a cab came round the corner and swept past him, in the window of which was the devotional face that he knew—ah, too well!—in and out of his dreams, and the sun glinted with a flash on the masses of saffron hair that for him had so long proved a sanctified colour.

This vision gave him back strength. He was not too late. She might be saved yet—for herself, but not for him—and in a moment, with

the strength of a strong man, he had called another cab, had got in, and was following her.

She had not seen him—perhaps if she had, would scarcely have recognised him. They went on, gradually leaving the open crowded streets of the seaport town, until they came to the narrower and dark quarters—the one cab following at a distance—until at last they came close to another dock, and the first cab drew up at a second-class plaster-fronted hotel, called the Angel.

Mr. Tillotson stopped at a distance: saw a golden flash as she got down and went in. Then, after a pause, got out himself and went in too.

He said he wished to see the lady who had just entered. There were no questions asked. They only said she was just going away, and that they were "making out hers and the gentleman's bill." He went up with his hand on his heart, opened the door softly, and there saw her, with her bonnet still on, her face bent forward on the table and covered by her hands. She was weeping, and did not hear or see.

This sight brought fury and strength back to the husband's weary frame. He walked up straight to her and laid his hand on her wrist. She looked up, gave a cry, and started, shrank back from him to the sofa. He stood looking at her a moment, then spoke:

"I have found you—you may thank Heaven—and have saved you from disgrace in spite of yourself. Come out of this place; we must not stay here longer—not a moment—not a second. Quick!—so long as I have strength to move."

Part of her start had indeed been at his changed and shrunken face. Ten years seemed to have come upon him since yesterday. His was more the face of a dying than a living man. She had scarcely heard what he had said, or gathered its import, she was so shocked and scared. She ran to him.

"O," she said, "what does this mean? You are ill. What has done all this?"

"What has done this?" he said, motioning her back. "You, you cruel, heartless, wicked woman!—you cold woman—whom I now see in her true colours. God forgive you. Thank Him that you have escaped public disgrace for your guilt!"

She understood it all at once, and drew herself up.

"Disgrace! crime! Do you seriously say this?"

"Injured, of course!" he said, smiling bitterly. "The day is over for that to have effect. The farce has ended. Come; come away with me now to London. After to-morrow you are free. But comfort yourself with this—that you are *saved* now; and that, for the time, the disgrace you would have brought on yourself and on me is averted. Come!"

The scorn—the sense of injustice—the sheer amazement—that was filling her, overpowered every other thought.

"And *you* speak in this way; you can slander

me in this way. Then I shall not say one word. I owe it to my own dignity."

"Dignity!" said he, with a dismal sneer.

"Neither," she went on, "shall I return with you, as you propose. Let it end, as you say; but let it end here."

"End here!" he repeated. "No; you must come. It is my duty at least to save you."

"Save me!" she repeated excitedly, "there is the slander again! But it must end. The sufferings I have borne for three months I will not bear for another day. I know the vile thoughts that have been in your mind all this time; the cruel, unfair, and unwarrantable suspicions that you have been feeding on—unworthy of yourself; unworthy of me. I could not endure them for another hour. I understand the whole. I scorn justification. What reparation can you ever make for all your suspicions and unworthy plottings and watchings? It must end, and end here."

She paused a moment, then went on with fresh excitement:

"Not one word shall pass my lips as to last night's business; not a single word. I disdain to make an excuse. If you will, you may find out the truth from those who know it, and will tell you; but it will be too late then. Guilt? disgrace? O, shame on you! If you only knew the truth, and what a sacrifice I made!"

"O, I know," he said, not indeed trying to smile, as might be supposed from the form of words, but with a sad despair. "I know about that! I found *that* out early."

"You do not understand yet, and *cannot* understand! Guilt? disgrace? I will say this much here—Heaven is looking down on me now, and I call on it to listen and judge me—up to the day I married you I *did* love him with my whole heart and soul; and up to the day I married you, beyond friendship and gratitude, I had no feeling of what is called love for you!"

"I know, I know!" he said bitterly.

"A grand admission, you will say," she went on. "But wait. From that hour, I declare to Heaven, as I stand here, I set myself to tear that old affection from my heart. As I live, there was not a minute that I was not busy with that struggle! Watching myself; every day making progress, every day doing violence to myself—until at last I had succeeded. Was this the disgrace and guilt you charge me with? I am innocent—innocent! In dream, thought, word, or deed I am innocent before God!" She raised her arm to heaven, and the devout eyes looked up.

Mr. Tillotson gazed at her a little wildly.

"Well, I did not know; I did not see it. And last night. Ah, last night!"

"Ah, last night!" she repeated; "you will know of *that*, never fear. But too late. I dis-

dain to say a word. There, it is all ended now. Disgrace and guilt? I know on whose head rest the disgrace and guilt of this night. I have borne it too long. My life has been made wretched by your ungenerous, unmanly, unfounded suspicion; a morbid, diseased suspicion that would stop even charity itself—that would keep me from obeying the despairing call of one who was, as he believed, in the last extremity; and whom I *did* love with all his faults, and who *has* loved me to the end!"

Mr. Tillotson gave a groan, and started forward eagerly.

"What!" he cried; "you did not go down with him? He sent for you! O, what have I said!—what have I done? What does this mean?"

She did not answer; but went on. "An unhappy wanderer, who has been unfortunate all his life. I should have blushed had I refused him."

He put his hands up to his forehead, and said in a low voice, as if to himself, "O fool—fool!"

She did not hear, but went towards the door.

"You shall learn the whole," she said, in a softened tone; "later—after we have both gone on our separate paths. I shall now go back to London."

Mr. Tillotson said not a word. He did not raise his head. He seemed to have been struck down. He made no protest. A strange change indeed had come over *her*. She passed him slowly, looked back at him, then, as if touched by compassion for his worn, suffering face and hopeless prostration, turned and said to him with the old sweetness, "Why, why did you do this? He is gone now, I shall never see him again, and——"

Tillotson gave a start, ran forward, would have stopped, but she had gone—had floated away. With a half cry, and the exclamation he had made before, "Fool, fool!" he sank back into the chair.

"Gone!" he repeated, "Gone!"

Suddenly he heard outside the door an unequal footstep that he knew. It came nearer and nearer, and when Mr. Tillotson turned round he saw a very familiar figure standing in the doorway, and heard the familiar voice.

"My God Almighty! Tillotson here!"

In the next Number will be commenced a new Serial Story, entitled

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By the AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

CHAPTER I. IN THE AVENUE.

"I'm to keep to the right?"

"Keep on a bearin' to the right, sir, 'cross Watch Common, and down One Ash Hill, and that'll bring you straight on to Poynings, sir! No luggage, sir?"

"None, thank you!"

"Luggage! no! I should think not! party's without a overcoat, don't you see, Thomas?—without a overcoat, and it freezin' like mad! Poynings, indeed! What's he doin' there? He don't look much like one of the company! More like after the spoons, I should say!"

The polite porter who had made the inquiry, and the satirical station-master who had commented on the reply, remained gazing for a minute or two at the stranger who had just arrived at the Amherst station of the South-Eastern Railway, and then went back to the occupations from which the premonitory whistle had called them; which, in the porter's case, consisted of a retirement to a little wooden watch-box where, surrounded by oil-cans, grease-boxes, dirty swabs of cloth, and luggage-barrows reared on end and threatening with their fore-feet, he proceeded to the mending of his shoes with a bit of tin and a few tacks, while the station-master turned to the accounts which extracted the marrow from his very soul, and carried on what he called the "tottle" of a drove of two hundred and sixty oxen, conveyed at per head.

"Freezing like mad." The station-master was right. The frost, which of late years holds aloof, utterly destroying the pictorial prophecies of the artists of the illustrated periodicals regarding Christmas Day, and which, with the exception of a two days' light rime, had left January a moist and muggy month, had set in with the commencement of February, hard, black, and evidently lasting. The iron-bound roads rang again, even under the thin boots of the stranger, who hurried over them with a light and fleeting step. The sharp keen air whirling over bleak Watch Common so penetrated his thin and wretched clothing, that he shivered horribly, and, stopping for an instant, beat his sides with his hands in an awkward manner, as one to whom the process was new, and who was vainly en-

deavouring to imitate some action he had seen. Then, he hurried on with a short rapid jerking step, essentially different from the league-swallowing swinging pace of the regular pedestrian accustomed to exercise: stumbling over the frozen solid ruts made by the heavy cart-wheels, slipping on the icy puddles, and ever and anon pausing to take fresh breath, or to place his hand against his loudly-beating heart. As he skirted the further edge of the common, and arrived at the brow of the hill which the porter had mentioned to him, and which he recognised by the solitary tree whose branches clanged above him in the night wind, he heard, by the chimes of a distant church, ten o'clock rung out sharp and clear through the frosty air. He stopped, counted each chime, and then set off again at a quickened pace, his progress down the descent being easier now, muttering to himself as he went:

"Ten o'clock! I must press on, or they'll all be in bed, I suppose. Beastly respectable, old Carruthers, from what I can make out from the Madre, and what little I saw of him! Servants up to prayers and all that kind of thing. No chance of getting hold of her, if I can't make her know I am there, before those prayers come off. Glass of cold water and flat candlestick directly they're over, I suppose, and a kiss to Missy and God bless you all round, and off to bed! By George, what a life! What an infernal, moping, ghostly, dreary existence! And yet they've got money, these scoundrels, and old Carruthers could give you a cheque that would make you wink. Could! Yes, but wouldn't, specially to me! Ba, ba, black sheep, and all the rest of it! Here's a poor tainted mutton for you, without the wind being in the least tempered to him! Jove, it goes through me like a knife! There'll be a public somewhere near, I suppose, and when I've drawn the Madre, I'll step off there and have some hot rum-and-water before turning in. Hold up, there, you hawbuck brute, pull your other rein! What's the use of your lamps, if they don't show you people in the road?"

He had sprung aside as he spoke, and now stood flat against and pushing into the leafless hedge as a carriage with flashing lamps and steaming horses whirled so closely by him as almost to brush his arm. The coachman paid no attention to his outcry, nor did the footman, who, almost hidden in overcoats, was fast asleep in

the rumble behind. The next instant the carriage was whirling away; but the pedestrian, seeing the condition of the footman, had swung himself on to the hind step, and, crouching down behind the rumble and its unconscious occupant, obtained a shelter from the bitter wind, and simultaneously a lift on his road. There he crouched, clinging firmly with both hands in close proximity to the enshrouded knees of the unconscious footman—knees which, during their owner's sleep, were very helpless and rather comic, which smote each other in the passage of every rut, and occasionally parted and surveyed the dreary gulf of horsecloth between them, to be brought together at the next jolt with a very smart concussion—and there he remained until the stopping of the carriage, and a sharp cry of "Gate" from the coachman, induced him to descend from his perch, and to survey the state of affairs from that side of the carriage most removed from a certain light and bustle into which they had entered. For, on the other side of the carriage to that on which the stranger stood, was an old-fashioned stone lodge with twinkling lights in its little mullioned windows, and all its thousand ivy-leaves gleaming in the carriage-lamps, and happy faces grouped around its door. There was the buxom lodge-keeper the centre of the group, with her comely red face all aglow with smiles; and there was her light-haired sheep-faced husband standing by the swinging iron gates; and there were the sturdy children, indulged with the unwonted dissipation of "sitting up;" and there was the gardener's wife awaiting to see company come in, while her master had gone up to look at fires in hothouses; and there were Kidd, the head keeper, and little Tom, his poor idiot boy, who clapped his hands at the whirling lights of the carriages, and kept up an incessant boom of imbecile happiness. Sheep-faced male lodge-keeper bobbing so furiously as to insist on recognition, down goes window of carriage furthest from the stranger, and crisp on the night air cries a sharp curt voice,

"How do, Bulger? Not late, eh? hum—ah! not late?"

To which Bulger, pulling at invisible lock of hair on forehead:

"No, Sir John! Lots company, Sir John! Seasonable weather, Sir——"

But the carriage was whirled away before Bulger could conclude, and before the stranger could resume his place under the sheltering lee of the now conscious footman. He shrank back into the darkness—darkness deeper and thicker than ever under the shadow of the tall elms forming the avenue leading to the house, and remained for a minute buried in thought.

The night was clear, and even light, with the hard chilly light of stars, and the air was full of cold—sharp, pitiless, and piercing. The wind made itself heard but rarely, but spared the wayfarer not one pang of its presence. He shrank and shivered, as he peered from under the gaunt branches of the trees after the carriage with its glittering lights.

"Just like my luck!" he thought, bitterly. "Nothing is to be wanting to make me feel myself the outcast that I am. A stranger in my mother's house, disowned and proscribed by my mother's husband, slinking like a thief behind the carriages of my mother's fine friends. I will see my mother, I must see her; it is a desperate chance, but surely it must succeed. I've no doubt of *her*, God bless her! but I have my doubts of her power to do what I want."

He emerged from the shadow of the trees again, and struck into the avenue. He quickened his pace, shivering, and seeing the long line of way lying level before him, in the sombre glimmer of the night, he went on with a more assured step. Angry and bitter thoughts were keeping the young man company, a gloomy wrath was in his dark, deep-set eyes, and the hands which he thrust into his coat-pockets clenched themselves with an almost fierce impatience. He strode on, muttering, and trying to keep up an air of hardihood (though there was no one to be deceived but himself), which was belied by the misgivings and remorse at his heart.

"A fine place and a grand house, plenty of money, and all that money gives, and no place for her only son! I wonder how she likes it all! No, no, I don't; I know she is not happy, and it's my fault, and *his*." His face grew darker and more angry, and he shook his clenched hand towards a stately house, whose long lighted façade now became visible.

"And *his*—*his* who married my mother, and deceived her, who gave her hopes he never intended to fulfil—my ill conduct the cause of his forbidding her to bring me here!—he always hated me; he hated me before he saw me, before he ever knew that I was not a sucking dove for gentleness, and a pattern of filial obedience and propriety; he hated me because I existed—because I was my mother's son; and if I had been the most amenable of step-sons, he would have hated me all the same, only he would have shown his hatred differently, that's all. I should have been brought here, and made to feel insignificance, instead of being left to beg or starve, for all he cares. I am better off as it is."

A harsh smile came over his face for a moment. "Quite a blackguard, and all but a beggar. All but? No, quite a beggar, for I am coming to beg of my mother—coming to your fine house, Capel Carruthers, like a thief or a spy; slinking in at your gates under cover of your fine friends' fine carriages; a prodigal step-son, by Jove, without the faintest chance of a welcome, and every probability of being turned out, if discovered. Company here, too, of all nights in the year, to make it more difficult to get hold of old Brookes unsuspected, but not so unfortunate either, if I'm seen. Hangers about are to be found even in the country, I suppose, on festive occasions. There's the house at last! A grand place, grim as it is under the stars, with a twinkling firmament of its own on the

ground floor. The lights look warm. Good God, how cold it is out here!" Again he drew back close to the tall dark stems of the trees, to let a carriage pass; when it had discharged its load under the portico, he emerged cautiously upon the broad carriage sweep by which the company were arriving.

The house was an old one, and was surrounded by a narrow fosse or ditch, which in former days might have been full of water, and used for defensive purposes, but which was now drained and dry, and served as a kind of area, looked into by the windows in the basement. Above this fosse, and stretching away on either side of the heavy portico, was a broad and handsome stone terrace, the left hand portion of which lay in deep shadow, while the right hand portion was chequered with occasional light, which made its way through the partially closed shutters of the ball-room. Cautiously crossing the broad drive, and slipping behind a carriage which was just discharging its load at the hall door, George Dallas, the stranger whose fortunes we have so far followed, crept into a dark angle of the porch until the crunching of the gravel and the clanging of the door announced the departure of the carriage, and then, climbing the balustrade of the terrace, and carefully avoiding the lines of light, made his way to the window of the room, and peered in. At first, he shook so with the cold, that he could not concentrate his attention on what was passing before his eyes; but having groped about and found a small tree which was carefully protected with a large piece of matting, and which flanked one end of the balustrade, he quietly removed the matting, and, wrapping it round him, returned to his position, watching and commenting on the scene of which he was a spectator.

It was an old room on which George Dallas looked—an old room with panelled walls, surmounted by a curious carved frieze and stuccoed roof, and hung round with family portraits, which gave it a certain grim and stern air, and made the gay hothouse flowers, with which it was lavishly decorated, seem out of keeping. Immediately opposite the window stood the entrance door, wide open, and flanked by the usual bevy of young men, who, from laziness or bashfulness, take some time to screw their courage up to dancing-point. Close in front of them was a group which at once arrested George Dallas's attention.

It consisted of three persons, of whom two were gentlemen; the third was a young girl, whose small white-gloved hand rested on the arm of the older of her companions, who, as George Dallas caught sight of them, was in the act of presenting the younger to her. The girl was tall, slight, very graceful and elegant, and extremely fair. Her features were not clearly discernible, as she stood sideways towards the window; but the pose of the head, the bend of the neck, the braids of fair hair closely wound around the well-shaped head, and worn without any ornament but its own golden gloss, the

sweeping folds of her soft white dress—all bore a promise of beauty, which, indeed, her face, had he seen it, would have fully realised. He saw her bow, in graceful acknowledgment of the introduction, and then linger for a few minutes talking with the two gentlemen—to the younger of whom George Dallas paid no attention whatever; after which she moved away with him to join the dancers. The older man stood where she had left him, and at him George Dallas looked with the fixed intensity of anger and hatred.

"There you are," he muttered, "you worthy, respectable, hard-hearted, unblemished gentleman! There you are, with your clear complexion and your iron-grey whiskers, with your cold blue eyes and your white teeth, with your thin lips and your long chin, with your head just a little bald, and your ears just a little shrivelled, but not much; with your upright figure, and your nice cool hands, and your nice cool heart, too, that never knew an ungratified lust, or a passion which wasn't purely selfish. There you are, the model of respectability and wealth, and the essence of tyranny and pride! There you are—and you married my beautiful mother when she was poor, and when her son needed all that she could give him, and more; and you gave her wealth, and a fine house, and fine friends, and your not remarkably illustrious name, and everything she could possibly desire, except the only thing she wanted, and the only thing, as I believe, for which she married you. That's your niece, of course, the precious heiress, the rich and rare young lady who has a place in your house, though the son of its mistress is banished from it. That's the heiress, who probably does not know that I exist. I should not be surprised if he had ordered my mother to conceal the disgraceful fact. Well, the girl is a nice creature, I dare say; she looks like it. But where can my mother be?"

He approached the window still more closely; he ventured to place his face close to the panes for a moment, as he peered anxiously into the room. "Where is my mother?" he thought. "Good Heaven! if she did but know that I am shivering here."

The strains of sweet clear music reached his ears, floods of light streamed out from the ball-room, a throng of dancers whirled past the window, he saw the soft fluttering dresses, he heard the rustle of the robes, the sounds of the gay voices, and the ring of laughter, and, ever and anon, as a stray couple fell away from the dance, and lingered near the window, a fair young face would meet his gaze, and the happy light of its youth and pleasure would shine upon him. He lingered, fascinated, in spite of the cold, the misery of his situation, and the imminent risk of detection to which he was exposed. He lingered, and looked, with the longing of youth, for gaiety and pleasure; in his case for a simple gaiety, a more sinless pleasure, than any he was wont to know. Suddenly he shrunk quickly back and clutched hard at the

covering of matting in which he had shrouded himself. A figure had crossed the window, between him and the light—a figure he knew well, and recognised with a beating heart—a figure clad in purple velvet and decked with gleaming jewels; it was his mother. She passed hastily, and went up to Mr. Carruthers, then talking with another gentleman. She stretched out one jewelled arm, and touched him on the shoulder with her fan. Mr. Carruthers turned, and directly faced the window. Then George Dallas flung the matting which had covered him away, and left his hiding-place with a curse in his heart and on his lips.

"Yes, curse you," he said, "you dress her in velvet and diamonds, and make her splendid to entertain your company and flatter your pride, and you condemn her to such misery as only soft-hearted, strong-natured women such as she is can feel, all the time. But it won't do, Carruthers; she's my mother, though she's your wife, and you can't change her. I'll have some of your money, tyrant as you are, and slave as she is, before this night is over. I'm a desperate man; you can't make me more miserable than I am, and I can bring you to shame, and I *will*, too."

He stepped softly to the edge of the terrace, climbed the balustrade, and sat down cautiously on the narrow strip of grass beyond; then felt with his hands along the rough face of the wall which formed the front of the area. He looked down between his feet, the depth was about ten feet, he thought. He might venture to let himself drop. He did so, and came safely on his feet, on the smooth sanded ground. An angle of the house was close to him; he turned it, and came upon a window whose shutters, like those of the upper range, were unclosed, and through which he could see into the comfortable room beyond. The room was low but large, and the heavy carved presses, the table with green baize cover, the arm-chairs, one at each side of the fire, the serviceable comfortable and responsible appearance of the apartment, at once indicated its true character. It could be nothing but the housekeeper's room.

In the centre of the table stood an old-fashioned oil lamp, no doubt banished from the upper regions when the moderator made its appearance in society; close to the stand was a large Bible open, a pair of spectacles lying upon the page. A brass-bound desk, a file of receipts, a Tunbridge-ware workbox, and a venerable inkstand, were also symmetrically arranged upon the table. The room was empty, and the observer at the window had ample leisure and opportunity to scrutinise it.

"I am in luck," he said. "This is Nurse Ellen's room. There are the dreadful old portraits which she always insisted on keeping over the chimney-piece, and venerated, quite as much because she thought them objects of art, as because she fancied them really like my father and mother. There's her Bible, with the date of my birth and christening in it. I dare say those are the identical spectacles which I broke, playing Red Riding Hood's

grandmother. I wish she would come in, and come alone. What shall I do if she brings any one with her, and they close the shutters? How delightful the fire looks! I have a great mind to smash the window and get in. No one would hear the noise with all that crashing music overhead, and there does not seem to be a soul on this side of the house."

No sound of footsteps made itself audible on the terrace above his head. He was sheltered a little more in his present position, but still the cold was bitter, and he was shivering. The impulse to break the window grew stronger. He thought how he should avoid cutting his hand; his shabby gloves could not protect him, suppose he were to take off his waistcoat, and twist it around his hand and arm. He had unfastened one button of his coat, as the idea occurred to him, when a sound overhead, on the house side, caught his ear. It was the click produced by opening the fastening of a French window. Then came steps upon the light balcony, which was one of the modern decorations of the old building, and voices which reached him distinctly.

"Any influenza you may catch, or anything of that kind, you must ascribe to yourself, Miss Carruthers. You would come out this—hum—by Jove—awful night!"

"Oh, don't fear for me, Captain Marsh," said a light girlish voice, laughingly, "I'm Poynings bred, you know, and accustomed to be out in all weathers, so that I run no risk; and though it is wintry enough outside, the temperature of that room was becoming unbearable!"

"Think it must be caused by that old woman's red face that we noticed, or the thingummy—paradise feather in her cap. She with the very thin daughter. Don't you know?"

"Of course I know. The old lady is my aunt, Lady Boldero; the young one is my cousin Blanche!"

"Haw, by Jove, sorry I spoke, haw! By-the-by, that was Sir Thomas Boldero's park, where I met you riding on Friday, wasn't it, Miss Carruthers?"

"Yes. I was taking a short cut home, as I thought I should be late for dinner."

"You were going 'a rattling good pace, I noticed. Seemed quite to have distanced your groom."

"My groom! That's a luxury I very seldom indulge in—never, when I think I can dispense with it without my uncle's knowledge. It is disagreeable to me to have a man perpetually at my heels!"

"You shouldn't say that, Miss Carruthers—shouldn't, indeed. You don't know how pleasant it is—for the man."

"Very pretty indeed, Captain Marsh! And now that you've had the chance of paying a compliment, and have done it so neatly, we will go back, please. I begin to feel a little chilly."

As the speakers moved, something fell at George Dallas's feet. It was so dark in the corner where he stood, that he could not distinguish what it was, until the closing of the

windup above, gave him assurance that he might move in safety. Then he bent forward, and found it was a sprig of myrtle. He picked it up, looked at it idly, and put it into the breast-pocket of his miserable coat.

"What a sweet voice she has!" he said. "A sweet face too, I am sure; it must be so, to match the voice and the hair. Well, she has given me something, though she didn't intend it, and will probably never know it. A spirited, plucky girl, I am sure, for all her grace and her blonde style. Carries too many guns for the captain, that's clear!"

He dived down in the midst of his words, for the door of the room into which he had been looking, opened quietly, and an elderly woman in a black silk dress entered. After casting a glance round her, she was about to seat herself at the table, when Dallas gave two low taps in quick succession at the window. The woman started and looked towards the spot whence the sound came with a half-keen, half-frightened glance, which melted into unmixing astonishment when Dallas placed his face close to the glass and beckoned to her with his hand. Then she approached the window, shading her eyes from the candlelight and peering straight before her. When she was close to the window, she said, in a low firm voice:

"Who are you? Speak at once, or I'll call for help!"

"It's I, Nurse Ellen. I——"

"Good Heavens, Master George!"

"Yes, yes; open the window and let me in. I want to talk to you, and I'm half dead with cold. Let me in. So. That's it."

The woman gently raised the sash, and so soon as the aperture admitted of the passage of his body, he slipped through and entered the room, taking no notice of his old nurse, but making straight for the fire, before which he knelt, gazing hungrily at the flames, and spreading both his hands in eager welcome of the blaze. The old woman closed the window and then came softly behind him, placed her hand on his head, and, leaning over his shoulder and looking into his face, muttered:

"Good Lord, how changed you are, my boy! I should scarcely have known you, except for your eyes, and they're just the same; but in everything else, how changed!"

He was changed indeed. The last time George Dallas had taken farewell of his old nurse, he had parted from her, a big strong healthy youth of eighteen, with short curly brown hair, clear skin, bright complexion, the incarnation of youth and strength and health. He knelt before her now, a gaunt grisly man, with high cheek-bones and hollow rings round his great brown eyes, with that dead sodden pallor which a life of London dissipation always produces, and with long thin bony hands with which he clutched hold of the old woman, who put her arms round him and seemed inclined to burst into a fit of sobbing.

"Don't do that, nurse! don't do that! I'm weak myself, and seedy, and couldn't stand it.

Get me something to drink, will you? And, look here! I must see my mother to-night, at once. I've come from town on purpose, and I must see her."

"She does not know you are here?" asked Mrs. Brookes, while she gazed mournfully at the young man, still kneeling before the fire. "But of course she does not, or you would have told me."

"Of course, of course, Nurse Ellen," said George Dallas; "she knows nothing about it. If I had asked her leave, she would not have dared to give it. How is she, nurse? How does she like her life? She tells me very little of herself when she writes to me, and that's not often." He rose from his knees now, and pulled a ponderous black horsehair chair close to the fire, seated himself in it, and sat huddled together, as though cold even yet, with his feet on the broad old-fashioned fender. "I had to come at any risk. You shall know all about it, nurse; but now you must contrive to tell my mother I am here."

"How can I do that, Master George?" asked the old woman, in a tone of distress and perplexity. "She is in the ball-room, and all the grand folk are looking at her and talking to her. I can't go in among them, and if I could, she would be so frightened and put about, that master would see in a moment that something had happened. He is never far off where she is."

"Ha!" said George, gloomily; "watches her, does he, and that kind of thing?"

"Well, not exactly," said Mrs. Brookes; "not in a nasty sort of way. I must say, to do him justice, though I don't much like him, that Mr. Carruthers is a good husband; he's fond of her, and proud of her, and he likes to see her admired."

The young man interrupted her with selfish heedlessness.

"Well, it's a pity he has the chance to-night; but, however it's managed, I must see her. I have to go back to town to-morrow, and of course I can't come about here safely in the daytime. Think of some plan, nurse, and look sharp about it."

"I might go up-stairs and join the servants—they are all about the ball-room door—and watch for an opportunity as she passes."

"That will take time," said George, "but it's the best chance. Then do it, nurse, and give me something to eat while you are away. Will any of the servants come in here? They had better not see me, you know."

"No, you are quite safe; they are looking at the dancing," she answered, absently, and closing as she spoke the shutters of the window by which he had entered. She then left the room, but quickly returned, bringing in a tray with cold meat, bread, and wine. He still sat by the fire, now with his head thrown back against the high straight back of his chair, and his hands thrust into his pockets.

"Very plain fare, Master George," said the housekeeper, "but I can't find anything better without wasting time."

"Never mind, nurse. I'm not hungry, and

"I'm not above eating cold meat if I were. Beggars must not be choosers, you know; and I'm little better than a beggar, as you also know. Give me some wine. It isn't felony, is it, though I have got into my step-father's house through the window, and am drinking his wine without his knowledge or consent?"

His tone was very painful to the faithful old woman's ear. She looked at him wistfully, but made no reply. He rose from the chair by the fire, sullenly drew another chair to the table, and sat down by the tray. Mrs. Brookes left the room, and took her way along the white stone passage which led to the entrance hall of the mansion. Passing through a swinging door covered with crimson cloth, she entered a spacious square hall, decorated, after the fashion of country houses, with stags' heads and antlers. The floor was of polished oak, and uncarpeted, but at each of the six doors which opened into it lay a soft white rug. A bright fire blazed in the ample grate; and through the open door of the ball-room, light and the sound of music poured into the hall. A number of servants were standing about, some lingering by the fire, a few ranged close to the door of the dancing-room, exchanging comments upon the performances with perfect impunity. Under cover of the music Mrs. Brookes joined the group, which respectfully gave way at her approach, and ceded to her the front place. She looked anxiously, and for some time vainly, for her mistress. At length she perceived her, but she was seated at the further end of the room, in conversation with an elderly lady of extraordinary magnificence in point of apparel, and who required to be spoken to through an ear-trumpet. Mrs. Carruthers was not a skilful performer upon that instrument, and was obliged to give her whole mind to it, so that there was little chance of her looking in any other direction than the uninviting one of Mrs. Chittenden's ear for the present. Mrs. Brookes looked on impatiently, and longed for a break in the dancing, and a consequent movement among the company. At length the music ceased, the panting waltzers subsided into promenade, and Mrs. Carruthers rose to place her chair at the disposal of a young lady whose exertions had told upon her, and who breathlessly accepted the boon. As she stood for a moment turned towards the door, she caught sight of the housekeeper's face, and saw she looked pale and agitated. Catching her mistress's eye, the housekeeper made a slight stealthy sign. Very gracefully, and with perfect calm, the tall figure, in its sweeping velvet dress, made its way through the dispersed groups between it and the door, from which all the servants had precipitately retreated at the cessation of the music. What was wrong? Mrs. Carruthers thought. Something, she knew must be wrong, or Ellen would not be there beckoning to her. A second gesture, still more stealthy and warning, caused her to pause when within reach of the housekeeper's whisper, without turning her head towards her.

"What is it, Ellen?"

"Hush! where is master? Can he see you?"

"Yes, he is just beyond the screen. What is the matter?"

"Turn round, and stoop; let me tie your shoe—there!"

Mrs. Carruthers stood in the doorway, and bent her head, holding her foot out, and lifting her dress. Mrs. Brookes fumbled with the shoe, as she whispered rapidly:

"Come as soon as you can, to my room. Be careful that you are not missed. Some one is there who wants to see you."

"To see me, Ellen? On such a night, and at such an hour! What is wrong? Who is there?"

The old woman looked earnestly into the frightened face, bending over her, and said rather with her lips than with her voice:

"Master George!"

A TOWN IN ASHES.

I ARRIVED at Drammen by the boat from Christiania on the evening of Wednesday, the 11th of July, and left at noon on Friday, the 13th. Being a stranger to the place, and closely occupied with business while there, I had little time for acquiring local information, and can merely relate what I saw.

Drammen is the principal place in Norway for export of timber, and contained about thirteen thousand inhabitants. It was situated on the River Dramm, at the point where the river empties itself into the Drammen Fjord. This fjord is the western of the two branches into which the Skager Rack, at its northern extremity, divides itself, the Christiania Fjord being the eastern branch. The Dramm here runs from west to east, and from the junction onwards the fjord expands into a lake stretching eastwards, and surrounded by lofty hills. North and south of the city itself rise similar hills, those on the north side being rocky and precipitous.

A wooden bridge of about a dozen handsome arches stretched across the river. The city extended on both sides of the water for about half an English mile above the bridge, and a mile and a half below it, an island midway between the two shores towards the east being also built upon. Above bridge the river is scarcely wider than the Thames at Hammersmith; but below bridge the fjord may be said to commence, and the water gradually gains a great expanse.

With the exception of eight or ten recent buildings, the whole city was constructed of wood; the houses being formed of pine-logs laid horizontally, dovetailed and strongly nailed at the angles, the exterior and interior surfaces of the walls being neatly covered with painted boards. The roofs were formed of pan-tiles laid on a double thickness of planks. The principal portion of the city, including nearly all the shops and public offices, was on the north side of the river. It is this part which was burnt. The main street was very

narrow, running parallel to the shore; the houses, three or four stories high, joined one another through nearly the whole length. The churchyard on the west, the market-place near the bridge, and the gas-works on the east, were the only breaks in the line.

From the above it will be readily inferred that the builders of this city had carefully prepared the materials for a splendid conflagration, and that nature had provided the means of viewing the magnificent spectacle to perfection.

A small fire had occurred on the Wednesday evening, which consumed a timber-yard in the north-eastern quarter of the city and extended no further. Myself and two companions saw this fire as we ascended the fjord in the steamer. On Thursday evening, at six o'clock, having been engaged all day south of the fjord, we were startled from our occupation by the discharge of four guns in rapid succession. This, we learned, was the authorised signal of the breaking out of a fire, and that on hearing it every able-bodied citizen must attend and assist. We crossed the bridge with a crowd of such assistants. Smoke was rising in the extreme west. Not being ourselves alarmed nor much interested, we proceeded to our hotel in the market-place, and ordered dinner. We had not been there five minutes before we found the hotel people, in great excitement, packing and removing their goods; every one exclaiming, "The church is on fire!" The church was a full quarter of a mile westward of the market-place, and an equal distance eastward of the burning houses, a spark from which had ignited the tower.

We went out on a tour of inspection. A fresh breeze was blowing from the west, straight down the street. The fire had commenced about a hundred yards from the western extremity of the city. On our arrival, about a dozen houses on the north side of the main street were burning. The sparks came down with the wind, but the distance from the church was so great, it seemed incredible that they should have set it on fire. Yet it was so; and the burning of the church was the destruction of the town. The tower was of stone; the roof of the tower of pantiles and timber. This roof was burning and blazing fiercely when we reached the spot. We waited until the roof fell in. That was at a quarter to seven, by the church clock immediately below the roof. Subsequently, we found the face of the clock melted away, but, the hands remaining, pointed to half-past seven. The clock continued to go three-quarters of an hour after the falling in of the roof. We went back to the burning houses and marvelled to see how capricious the fire was. It scorned to go straight on from house to house. It had missed four and seized on the fifth, missed three more and seized on the ninth. This phenomenon we observed over and over again during the night. Aided by the wind, the fire now came onwards towards the churchyard with terrific energy, making the efforts of some eight or ten

small engines squirting at the walls appear a perfect mockery.

Retracing our steps, we found the body of the church (all of wood and nearly new) had burst into a blaze. Frantic efforts were made to saturate the buildings next the church eastward; but in vain. At seven o'clock, flames burst from a house a little further on, between the church and the market-place. Seeing this, and the main street being impassable, we ran round a back street with all speed to the hotel, packed up our luggage, brought it out, sent it across the river, and then looked up the street. The fire was coming down both sides like an avalanche, and was only a few doors off.

At half-past seven, the whole west side of the market-place was in flames. Half an hour had brought the fire hither from the church, destroying in its progress a solid block of handsome houses and shops a quarter of a mile in length. The last inhabitants to quit their homes were the pigeons. They sat on the roof till it glowed beneath their feet, and then flew about distractedly in the smoke and flames.

The market-place was at the moment nearly filled with people; but not crowded. Every conceivable conveyance on land and water was employed to remove goods. On the whole, the people were quiet, and did not lose presence of mind. Strange things of course were done. Men, and especially women, boiled under loads of rubbish, which one lamented should be saved, while really valuable property was left to burn. A little old woman on the opposite side of the market-place was on her knees praying most devoutly; but if her petition were for the saving of her house, it was not granted. The people at the telegraph-office having doubtless despatched their last dying message, burst open the upper windows with a crash, and threw their furniture down into the street; but whether the resulting fragments were ever picked up again we did not stay to see. Great anxiety was now felt to save the east side of the square and the remainder of the town. The face of the buildings on that side was of stone. On the north side the buildings were few and scattered, but on the south the houses still intact were divided from the line of fire only by the width of the street leading to the bridge. No efforts were now of any avail; no one could do more than wait the issue.

The fire was raging so frightfully, that it was dangerous to remain longer. While one followed our luggage over the river, two of us went to the back of the town and across the fields towards the hill. We stopped at a fence a quarter of a mile from the burning mass, and turned, but found looking impossible; the glow was that of a thousand furnaces, and our eyes and faces smarted with the heat. We went further off, and clambered up the rocks, and sat down for five minutes; it became again too hot there. We retreated yet higher up. The rocks were quite warm to the touch, although now the

distance from the nearest burning house was half an English mile. From this elevation, the evening before, we had looked down on a fair city resting picturesquely on the waters. Now one-fourth of it is a panorama of flame. Will that one-fourth be all? It will; the fire does not spread. It will not; see, a hundred yards and more behind the east side of the square, and that much more distant from the fire, one ridge of roof along its whole length shows a tiny series of jets of flame. No more than that. Ten minutes afterwards other houses showed little puffs of smoke. Ten minutes yet again, and that house is one mass of flames, and, from forty houses round, up rises simultaneously a volume of smoke dense and black as midnight. Then all at once they burst together into a flame, which for volume and height can rarely have been equalled in the world. The city for a mile and a half onward and eastward is irrevocably doomed. No power can save it if the wind continues.

This was at half-past eight. How long does it take to burn a detached wooden house of moderate size? Here is a conclusive experiment. North of the church, some two hundred yards, stand two good family houses quite separate. They have two stories and attics, sixteen or eighteen windows each in the front. These, one after another, emitted smoke, first from the gable ends, then from the ridge, then from the attic windows. The ridge flamed out; the flames descended; and from the first puff of smoke to the time when the whole house was in flames, was ten minutes, and fifteen minutes more cancelled the house entirely. Where it had been was nothing. Two chimneys and nothing. No standing walls. Nothing, in fact, struck us more forcibly while on this height than (a few minutes excepted) the small quantity of smoke, and the manner in which it was carried upward by the wind, till, in the pure air of this region, it vanished over the lake. The horizon, from the position we occupied, was nowhere obscured by it. No doubt this was mainly due to the intense heat which perfected the combustion. Both sights and sounds from our observatory were melancholy in the extreme. Immediately below us, acres of furniture and thousands of homeless wanderers covered the fields and cemetery from the town to the hill. A cow tried vainly to bury herself from the heat in a large bush, and then rushed madly about the field. A little higher up two horses grazed quietly as though nothing were the matter, their heads turned full to the fire. The presence of pigs is known by their horrible squealing, as one after another the fire reaches them. The roar of the fire as of a vast cataract, or as that of London streets a hundred times told—the crash of falling timbers—but no sound of people. They have entirely given up hope, and merely look quietly on. It is now ten o'clock, but still daylight. The breeze freshens, and with it the intensity of the fire increases sud-

denly. The flames mount higher, the buildings light up one after another more quickly, the panorama of fire extends and extends continually, and all of it glows with a perfectly white heat, which, during the short darkness of midnight, illuminated the south side of the city with an intense colourless light. The heat now becomes more oppressive than ever, though we are exposed to the full force of the wind, which blows the fire away from us.

At eleven o'clock we descended to the extreme west of the city, and, by courtesy of the governor of the province whom we encountered, procured a seat with him in a boat and rowed to the opposite side of the river. Here eight or nine ladies whose houses were gone met our obliging conductor, and a long conference ensued. What struck one was, that these ladies, under calamity so awful and sudden, neither cried nor despaired. They conversed cheerfully, as though on an ordinary topic.

We went now a mile to the east to get something to eat, our dinner having been consumed by the fire. Afterwards, at midnight, we went to the top of a warehouse facing the line of fire on the opposite shore. The magnificence of the spectacle from this point it is impossible to exaggerate. A mile and a half of the opposite shore was burning at a white heat. At the west end, on our extreme left, the fire had partially exhausted itself; and there began the lower angle of a pyramid of flame and highly-illuminated smoke, which, ascending towards the sky higher and higher as it came down the river, attained opposite to us a marvellous elevation. There was but little twilight, and the bright vapour caused the adjacent sky to appear of so deep a blue that it was almost black. The fire still advanced down the bank of the fjord. We reached the gasworks, from which the gas had been expelled. This building was of brick, and delayed the progress of the fire more than half an hour, till we almost thought the remnant of the town was saved. But the same phenomenon as at the market-place again occurred, and the first building to ignite beyond, was a long way down the shore. At three o'clock in the morning we re-crossed the river at the west end. So complete was the destruction, that we walked up the middle of the burnt-out street to the church. The granite pavement was hot to our feet, and crumbled to the touch. There were no walls to fall on us. The very ashes were consumed; nothing was visible in this part but a forest of chimneys, about one or two to a house. Proceeding northward of the town, the multitude of chattels and of people had increased. Many were sleeping, wrapped up, upon sofas.

From the heights at the east end we watched the only good house uncondemned. It was a white one, and we hoped it might be spared. This was at five o'clock. We returned to the house over the river, slept till eight, and then the white house was gone. It was the last burnt, and was the British consul's.

The line of desolation is full two English miles in length, and from a quarter to half a mile in breadth.

POPULAR SONGS.

"LET me write the songs of a people, and I care not who makes the laws." There is sound philosophy in that saying, but I am afraid we cannot accept it from the mouth of the popular song-writer of the present day. The poor-law is not a perfect enactment, but, as an agent of amelioration, I should say that its influence was superior to that of Slap-bang. The Bankruptcy Act is said to be a failure, yet, on the whole, the benefits which it confers must be at least equal to those which society derives from Hunkey Dorum, or the Howling Swell. Much as we all value the Sugar Shop, I believe the commercial treaty with France will fairly compete with it on its own ground. It might also be said that the navigation laws, with all their faults, are more to be loved and valued than Paddle Your Own Canoe, although that popular lyric, with a "Now, then, all together" chorus, earnestly enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourself. And the Revised Code, though open to objection, might claim to be as strong a stimulus to the progress of mankind as Jog Along, Boys, or its popular sequel, Jog Along, Girls.

The minstrels of old, sang the glorious deeds of heroes, the troubadours and minnesingers warbled of the loves of fair ladies and gallant knights, the Celtic bards kept alive patriotism and nationality among their countrymen with "thoughts that breathed and words that burned," the lispng verse-stringers of a softer age celebrated the beauty of Phillis and Chloe prettily enough, the sturdier ballad-makers of the last century tuned their harps to the roar of the sea and glorified Britannia, Nelson, and hearts of oak. The song-writer of the present recounts, in shambling doggerel, the kitchen cupboard-love of the cook and the policeman, and the taproom-courtship of the oyster-wench and the omnibus cad.

The decline and fall of the popular song has been sudden and rapid. Less than twenty years ago we were still singing My Pretty Jane, the Maids of Merry England, and Phillis is my only Joy. We rarely hear songs of this character sung now, and there are no new songs of the same class to take their place. The successor of My Pretty Jane was the Ratecatcher's Daughter; of Phillis, Naughty Jemima Brown. My Pretty Jane was a foolish thing, to be sure, but if we did press her to meet us—meet us in the willow glen when the bloom was on the rye (for no particular reason, at that floral season, except that she was "shy"), she did not outrage our feelings by taking too much to drink and cutting away with a chap that drives an ugly donkey-cart. Phillis was a very different young woman from Jemima Brown. She was faith-

less, it is true, like Jemima; but she was faithless "as the winds and seas," not as a pair of sixteen-shilling trousers, made not to sit down in. The pretty, pleasing (though foolish) sentimental ballad has almost entirely disappeared, and instead of celebrating woman's loveliness and grace, we sing of her ugliness and disgrace, with "Now, then, all together," and she stabbed herself with the carving-knife, and a right fol de riddle lol de ray. Murder and suicide have become exceedingly comic in these days. The carving-knife and the water-butt are the modern dagger and bowl, and their mortal effects are invariably celebrated in a chorus of jubilation.

The earliest so-called negro songs, which initiated the present comic era, were inoffensive enough, and some of these were united to very pretty music. Uncle Ned was a stupid old nigger, and scarcely worthy of the attention of the white folks; yet there was pathos in his little history. It was truly pitiful to hear that the old man musical had got no teeth for to eat the oat cake, and got no eyes for to see. And there was a touch of poetry in his fiddle hanging up, silent for evermore, because old Uncle Ned was dead, and

Gone where the good niggers go.

The old Folks at Home, originating in the streets, found an echo in many a drawing-room; and genteel young ladies, singing in unison, brought tears into the eyes of their auditors with

Way down upon the Swanee river,

Far, far away,

There's where my heart is turning ever,

There's where the old folks stay.

Even old Joe, with that idiotic propensity of his for kicking up behind and before when he went with his old banjo to court Dinah, was a decent sort of nigger, and might be heard of in the best society, "without calling a blush into the cheek of innocence;" while Sally's only fault was that she would "twist her heel around," and come up and down the middle when her master's back was turned.

Managers of theatres still act upon the faith that the lower classes like something deep and sentimental, but the managers of the music-halls, which are now the academies of popular music, take an opposite view of their likings, and give them the broadest comicalities. The popular comic singer, who sings such songs as Slap-bang, Costermonger Joe, The Mousetrap Man, The Cure, &c., is better paid than many of the artistes at the Italian Opera. He is the idol of the audiences at the music-halls, though in most cases he cannot sing a note, and is utterly devoid of humour. How is it that this noisy unartistic performer has suddenly become such a favourite, to the utter banishment of all appeals to the heart and sentiment?

In pursuing this inquiry, let us see what there is in his songs to excite so much delight and enthusiasm. One of the most popular of them, some little time ago, was the Sugar Shop. Here is the first verse:

I love a very pretty girl,
Her name's Sally Sewing Cotton;
Oh! isn't she a cherubim
With her best Sunday frock on!
My Sally has a lovely dress,
With frills around the bottom,
And when I first spied Sally,
By jingo, I was struck!

O my! she lodges at the sugar shop,
O my! I guess that I'm in luck;
O dear! she's sweet as any lollipop,
I am in love with Sally, she is a darling duck.

The young man makes up to Sally in Regent-street, is introduced to her mother, who keeps a mangle; to her brother, who is a baker; and Sally herself, who is "an anti-floral maker," accepts him:

And on Sunday next at ten o'clock
Both of us will be married,
I'd rather it was to-morrow,
For she's such a darling duck.

Chorus—O my! she lodges at the sugar shop, &c.

The German Band was another "immensely popular song." The words were parodied in all the burlesques at the theatres, the music was played in every orchestra, and ground on every organ; and this is a specimen of the poetry:

Oh here you see a wretched man,
Made more so by deception,
I do forget what woes I can
In utter sheer dejection;
I married was to a sweet young girl,
Lor' how I curse the morn
That first I saw her, and so I wish
I never had been born!
I loved her, and she ought to have been
The most happy in the land,
But she loved a foreigner who blew a flageolet
In the middle of a German band.

In the course of five more long verses we learn that the name of the faithless woman was Susannah, that she could knit, sing, or dance, parley voo fransay, and, of course, play on the cottage pianer; but with all these accomplishments she had an incurable passion for a foreigner who blew a flageolet in the middle of a German band. Concerning this band and its members, we learn that—

The French horn was in C and the flageolet in G,
And the rest of them all out of tune,
But amid this awful row there was somehow
One who won the heart of Susannah,
Who stood laughing at the window while the
German flageolet

Winked at her in a most reckless manner.

The end of this most unhappy state of affairs was that Susannah bolted with the flageolet, taking away all her husband's "sticks." But the song is not destitute of a moral. The flageolet went for a "sojer" in America, and was shot, and the injured husband consoled himself thus:

In battle he was killed by a shot in the back,
But I've no need for caring,
As the German flageolet is a cold corpse,
While Susannah gets her living by charing.

The Jolly Dogs was so great a favourite as

to call for several sequels, such as the Jolly Cats and the Jolly Cocks. I find the words of the latter in the "Jolly Cocks' Song Book," with a coloured illustration of the jolly cock on the cover. The point of the song is, that everybody bears some resemblance to a cock—the lawyer, because he pecks at his clients; the member of parliament, because he crows; and the doctor, because he cocks his crest up. Thus:

The doctor cocks his crest up
If you tell him you're in pain,
And does his best to gather up a heap of golden grain.

How gently he will handle you,
Of which he has the knack,
Until when you are beaten
You are laid upon your back.

Chorus.

Then cock-a-doodle-doo,
I'm a cock-a-doodle-doo,
So come join with me in chorus,
Every cock-a-doodle-doo.

(*Spoken.*) Now, a *chro*-nometrical crow, for the doctor's chronometer. (*Crows.*)

"Fortey's edition" of new and popular songs is recommended to the public, as containing Sydney's great song of

WHO LIKES GRAVY ON THEIR TATERS?

Here is a verse:

Dere was a man in ole Virginny
And Steben was his name,
Was wedlocked, had two piccanini,
And was fader ob de same.
Move along, Steben, artful ole son,
One of the commentators;
His argument it was dis one,
Who likes gravy on their taters?

Move along, Steben, &c.

No song of the season has been received with so much favour as the Six Magnificent Bricks. It is published in various forms, with and without the music, and has been sung with unbounded applause at all the music-halls. It runs thus:

Myself and some friends, once thinking there would
be no harm,
Went for a walk, a row walking arm-in-arm,
The night it was dark, the streets they were very
calm,

When we went out for a spree.

Said Jones, Now, do what I tell you, my boys,
Hurrah, hurrah!

Louder, for that isn't half a noise,
Hurrah, hurrah!

Then we struck up the bagpipes once again

To let the people see

That we six magnificent bricks

Had made up our minds for a spree.

Fal de looodle, fal de ral doodle um,

Argh! argh! there's Sal and Methusalem.

Argh! argh! they're gone to Jerusalem,

Doodle um doodle um day.

The comic-song writer and the comic-song singer, who are, in most cases, one and the same person, have taken a great fancy lately to make fun of the name of the sacred city, and as one downward step in the path of impropriety leads

to another, he is generally driven to rhyme it with "Methusalem." One favourite song of the people runs:

My old horse he comes from Jerusalem,
Comes from Jerusalem,
Comes from Jerusalem.

He stepped so high that they put him in a
musee-um,

Down in Alabam.

But it is not often that the nonsense is so funny as this.

In the Swells' Songster, the latest monster budget of popular songs, may be found among the latest novelties, Sal and Methuselah, a verse of which runs thus:

You must know that Sal was a smart young gal,
And her fame had travelled far,
And an oyster-stand she kept in the Strand,
Not a mile from Temple Bar,
Her lover rose up each morning at five,
And he dressed by the light of a star,
He was a dog destroyer at a sausage-machine,
This young Methuselah.

Chorus.

The lady was fair, let me declare,
The gent tall and muscular,
And held in respect by one and all
Were Sal and Methuselah.

Nothing on the earth beneath, or in the heavens above, is sacred to the popular song writer when he wants to adorn his lyrical tale of Sal the oyster-wench with a rhyme.

A comic singer, who calls himself "the great," and who is said to have made a fortune by singing Slap-bang, lately introduced a song, which he sings in character, called Costermonger Joe. He imitates the voice and manner of a costermonger calling his wares in the street, relates how all the girls were in love with him, and at the end of each verse proudly invites the audience to sing with him in chorus:

I'm costermonger Joe,
I'm costermonger Joe.

I have seen a hall full of staid middle-aged respectable-looking people of both sexes, all declaring at the top of their voices that they were Costermonger Joe. There is another comic singer who calls himself "The Jolly," who has made a great fame in the music-hall sphere by singing Jog along, Boys. It is recommended as a song suitable for the drawing-room, and here is a specimen:

From me no doleful dirge you'll hear,
To make you sad or leave you queer;
But if you're dull, this chant of mine
Will wake you up like sparkling wine.
Ups and downs in life I've seen,
Lucky and unlucky been;
But wrong or right, or right or wrong,
This is the burden of my song—
Jog along, jog along, jog along, boys,
Jog along, boys, with a rattle and noise.
Jog along, jog along, jog along, boys,
Jog along, boys, hurrah!

I have seen a jolly gentleman in full evening costume, including brand-new white kid gloves, come on to sing this, telling the audience that

he composed the chorus expressly for them, and begging them to join in. I think I see in the verse given above the true answer to my query, "Whence the extraordinary popularity of these absurd songs?" They all have choruses, in which the audiences may join with Slap bang, a rattle and a noise, Jerusalem, or some other catch line of the kind, which tickles the ear without penetrating to the understanding.

Three of the most popular songs at the present time are Mince meat, Hunkey Dorum, and the Mousetrap Man. In the first:

My sweetheart was not a beauty bright,
Nor yet outright a perfect fright,
She was only cook to a barrow-nite,
And her name was Polly Ann;
When her onions she peeled I could almost cry,
As adoring before her I knelt,
But when she chopped mince meat at Christmas time,
What tranquil enjoyment I felt!
While her mince meat knife went
Chop chop chop, chop chop chop chop, chop chop,
While her mince meat knife went
Chop chop chop, chopety chopety chop.

Now, then, all together:

Chop, chop chop, &c.

Hunkey Dorum will show the degeneration which has taken place in negro songs:

I went out one day for a lark,
Hunkey Dorum, we am de boys,
I met a lubly gal in de park,
Hunkey Dorum, doodle dum day.

Of course the gal behaves shamefully, with a
Hunkey Dorum, doodle dum day.

I will not inflict the Mousetrap Man upon the patience of the reader; but I may remark that the music (which is very pretty) is played in drawing-rooms. If a young lady wants the piece, she must ask for it by the name of the Mousetrap Man; and on perusing it, she will learn how Miss Scratchem from Itchin kicked out her young man, slammed the door in his face, sent him adrift with a flea in his ear, "guv him turnips," whatever that may mean, and bolted with the mousetrap man, singing,

Mousetraps! mousetraps, who'll buy?

At a "first-class music-hall" the other evening, I heard a gentlemanly-looking youth singing about a man with a carpet-bag. Personating the man with the carpet-bag, the singer boasted of his rogueries—how he had made his trousers out of his landlady's sheets, swindled a hotel-keeper, bolting with the plate, and leaving his carpet-bag stuffed with bricks. When he is brought before the judge, he tells that functionary, "if there warn't such chaps as us there would be nothing for you to do." This clever retort was received with great applause. Another song by this genteel young man had for its chorus (in which the audience joined),

Larry doodle dumpy

Doodle, doodle day,

With a bundle rolled in her apron.

The bundle rolled in an apron was a baby, which was foisted upon the young man by a

young woman. When he unrolls the baby he twists its nose, which he says, with rare humour, is like a parish pickaxe, and the moral is that we are all to beware of a girl

With a bundle rolled in her apron,
Larry doodle dumpy, &c.

This young man—in genteel evening costume—sang a very gross song, which was hissed by two or three decent persons. The singer, on returning to the stage, had the impudence to rebuke them with another witty retort: “There were only two things that hissed, a goose and a serpent.” He had this so pat at the tip of his tongue, that I think he must have been used to hissing. Glory, Hallelujah, I see, has been incorporated among the popular comic songs. We have

Hang Jeff Davis on a crab-apple-tree,
Hang Jeff Davis on a crab-apple-tree,
Hang Jeff Davis on a crab-apple-tree,
As we go marching home.

Now, then, all together :

Oh, glory hallelujah, glory, glory
Hallelujah,
Oh, glory hallelujah, glory, glory
Hallelujah,
Oh, glory hallelujah, glory, glory,
His soul is marching on.

This is in the same programme with ‘Tilda Toots, or, You should have seen her Boots. ‘Tilda went skating in the park, and had a mishap :

As I, the chair, and ‘Tilda Toots,
Were struggling in a heap,
A dozen skaters, more or less,
Came o’er us in a heap ;
Some went tumbling head o’er heels,
Others on the back,
When suddenly where ‘Tilda lay,
The ice began to crack.
The water next came bubbling up,
Crash, I saw the boots
Alone above the waters,
Where had gone down ‘Tilda Toots.

Many persons, I dare say, have heard of the famous song of Paddle Your Own Canoe, without having heard it sung, or knowing what it means. As this is one of the best of the class, I will give a verse :

I’ve travelled about a bit in my time,
And of troubles I’ve seen a few,
But found it better in every clime
To paddle my own canoe.
My wants are small, I care not at all
If my debts are paid when due ;
I drive away strife in the ocean of life
While I paddle my own canoe.

Chorus.

Then love your neighbour as yourself
As the world you go travelling through,
And never sit down with a tear or a frown,
But paddle your own canoe.

Some of the very best of our old popular songs contain silly lines and bad rhymes, and some of them—as, for example, the Death of Nelson—are ungrammatical ; but very many of

the popular songs of the present day are destitute of sentiment, destitute of sense, destitute of humour. They are only tolerable because their vulgarly nonsensical words are smothered in pleasing music. We need not search far in order to discover that the public to whom they are addressed tolerate them because they have no choice. One summer’s day lately I was present at a bean-feast. After dinner, when conviviality began, the gay young apprentices favoured us with some songs of the music-hall class and in the music-hall style. They were well received ; but when a gentleman present—one of the old school—sang Tom Bowling, the greatest enthusiasm was aroused.

In all matters of art the people are very easy-going. They are content to take what they can get. But that is not to say that the people cannot appreciate better things than they have. “A very good song and very well sung,” is still the popular sentiment ; and if the people are content with a very bad song very ill sung, it is simply because they have no choice.

DISSOLVING VIEWS.

WHAT we saw yesterday, we do not see to-day ; what we behold to-day will be gone to-morrow. Days which follow each other, are not alike ; while years differ even yet more widely. The sights which continually meet our eyes, come like shadows, so depart.

Without wandering into universal space, in which permanence is a state unknown, and change the only constant condition ; where stars are set light to, extinguished, and re-lighted, within the memory of the human race ; where nebulae coagulate into solar systems which, when once wound up and set a-going, run down again as surely as an eight-day clock ; where nothing remains at rest for two consecutive seconds, or for two consecutive sixtieth parts of a second.

Earthly phantasmagoria have the advantage of passing more rapidly before our field of view. Some only last for a few short centuries before they change ; others not more than a generation or two ; while one generation occasionally witnesses a whole series of dissolving views. Life itself is a peep-show, of much the same kind as those which children see at fairs. Existence is a magic lantern set up with an endless stock of slides. The longer our term of life, and the more multiplied our opportunities, the greater variety do we behold of gaudy, glittering, or gloomy shadow-work. Short as our span is, we extend it infinitely by what we know of the past and divine of the future.

As an instance—I am hovering over a spot of earth smaller than the smallest of the small principalities which are now being swallowed by the Prussian harpy. It skirts the shore of one of two nations which, but for the interposition of a narrow sea, had else, like kindred drops, been mingled into one. Indeed, from my eminence, I behold them one. Where it lies geographically,

I cannot tell you, because geography is not. The equinoxes have to make a considerable precession before that science will see the light.

Before me lies a region of grassy downs, here undulating with wave-like slopes, there swelling up into pudding-shaped hills. There are verdant pastures with little wood; only patches of shrubby thickets, which shelter herds of animals known afterwards by their skeletons only. In pursuit of them are stealing men of like form and passions with ourselves, though with less intelligence and feeble means. But they must feed and clothe their wives and their little ones; so with spears and arrows headed with flint, they patiently pursue their prey. With flint knives they flay and joint it; with flint implements they convert its sinews into thread, its bones into tools, and its skin into vestments; they eat its flesh roasted over fires made of brushwood, chopped by flinten hatchets, for metallurgy is yet an undiscovered art—silex is the limit of their mineralogical acquirements. Iron lies under their feet, and they know it not; iron is in their hands—in the stone they snatch to hurl at a victim—and they are ignorant of the power within their grasp.

These primeval men retire to rest in burrows, like those of the rabbit; in rocky dens, like the home of the badger; in huts built on piles over the swampy lake, which the beaver taught them to fabricate. They are contented, nay happy, in their way; no money panics prevent their sleeping; no banks about to break give them the nightmare; no conquerors mulct them in millions of florins; European equilibrium disturbs them not; and they manage to keep up a decent appearance, even without their brougham and twelve hundred a year.

Such is the picture actually visible. Its date is, approximately—Well, dates are dangerous, and I had better not commit myself to that. The sun is shining on a pastoral scene so vast, that, being tethered where I am, I cannot even guess its limits. But soon the sky is darkened, the winds roar, the lightnings flash, the waters rush. They mount and mount, and sweep and eddy, covering all my prairies fathoms deep, until there is a Deluge—not Noah's, but the one previous to his. The ocean, tilted from its bed, sweeps from south to north, carrying with it streams of rock, and strewing mountain-tops in fragments over distant plains.

At last there is a subsidence of the waters. Dry land emerges; but a mighty change has come over the scene. My view has dissolved, literally. The English Channel has forced its way through the downs and opened up its tidal exits and entrances. On the opposite shore are the sites of Dover and Deal. At my foot lies a convenient spot for embarkation, which will one day be called Portus Itius.

A mist of long duration veils the earth. How long it endures, I will not attempt to tell. When it clears, they are come—that adventurous race, after conquering the by no means despicable Gaul; for he is not, as I see him, a com-

plete barbarian, like the German. His conqueror, who knows him well, never calls him by that name in the commentaries he is writing. The Gaul has large towns, a regular system of taxation, a religious creed, a powerful aristocracy, and a national education directed by the priests. Imperfect culture, if it do not quite enlighten the mind, at least prepares it for enlightenment. From the commencement of the war, the Gaul has imitated Roman tactics and constructed and worked military machinery with a success to which his invaders render justice. Roman civilisation will leave its stamp in France, long after other things have changed.

The Roman leader is a man whom some would fain make a demi-god, but who might really pass just as well for an imp of darkness in the flesh. He will have by-and-by admirers and imitators, who will prove themselves at least clever men, if they succeed in sinking to the level of his vices. It is great Cæsar himself, made of rather dirty clay. He comes, to achieve a bold enterprise.

He knows the people of the opposite island, Britain, only by their prowess in the Gallic wars; so he resolves to make their acquaintance—such acquaintance as the wolf makes with the flock. His ships are lying in readiness. It is the night—an imperial chronicler will tell you—of a 24th-25th of August. He starts with two legions of Roman soldiers, and succeeds in landing them at Deal. The beach is crowded with armed men, who try to repulse the hostile strangers. There is an obstinate struggle, but in vain. The Britons, astonished at the foe's audacity, tender their submission, and sue for peace. "*Audaces fortuna juvat*" is written somewhere. After eighteen days' absence only in England, great Julius returns to the port whence he came. Graver matters claim his attention. He wastes no time. "*Calvi prompti,*" "*bald and ready,*" is true at least of him.

Roman forms melt into empty air, while Gallic figures are greatly modified. The landscape is veiled in cloud for a while. When it clears away, a gusty night is tossing the waves; and from the offing, towards the shore, a long-boat is stealing in, followed by a sailing yacht. In the long-boat sits a careworn man, shivering beneath the January blast, and dressed in the uniform of the royal guards of England. But Captain Sclingues, who is lying here at anchor, is minded to know what the arrival means. So he sends the *Sieur de Taulx* with his gig to ask what news.

"Who goes there?" the *sieur* inquires, in a loud clear voice. "Whom have we on board these boats?"

"A milord who is obliged to fly from England," is the answer given. But the sallow-faced stranger, showing himself, is recognised by the French gig's master-at-arms.

"It is the king!" he immediately whispers to *De Taulx*. "King James the Second of England!"

De Taulx, who has been brought up in the belief of right divine, and who is also aware

of his own sovereign's notions, respectfully salutes the runaway monarch, assists him to land, and between two and three in the morning, conducts him to M. de Château-Guil-laume's house, the best in Ambleteuse, but a sorry lodging for one accustomed to regal splendour. After a little rest, sorely needed, he betakes himself to Boulogne, where he is met at the gate by the Duc d'Aumont, accompanied by all the Boulonnaise nobility, and the town militia under arms. He doffs the uniform worn by his guard, bedizens himself with orders and other gewgaws, and in the course of a few days sets off for Paris, to shelter himself under Louis the Fourteenth's wing.

James the Second and Louis the Fourteenth have faded away; their colouring has paled, their outline is gone. The canvas is occupied by actors of a totally different stamp. Martial hosts are again assembled, with the intention of invading Albion. Every preparation is made; all is ready; a propitious moment for starting has only to arrive. Not only in Boulogne itself, but at my own point of observation—a creek to the north of it—basins are hollowed out and lined with solid oaken piles, for the reception of the fleet of flat-bottomed boats which are to float England's conquerors across the Strait. The little great man himself is there, impatient. Through his telescope, he devours Britannia with his eye. The pillage of London will reward his soldiers; English conscripts will recruit his wasted army; English tribute will swell his diminished treasure. The nation of shopkeepers are soon to be taught the relationship between Liberty, Equality, and Tyranny. They are to inaugurate a régime of blood and glory, of civilisation by the bayonet, and the butchery of thousands for the pre-eminence of one.

So sure are these hosts of their success, that—reminding one of Babel—they are erecting, as a testimonial in honour of their chief, a column to commemorate the conquest of England. The town gives the commanding site, the quarry-owners present the marble, the officers and engineers subscribe their skill, and the common men contribute their labour. You see the tall shaft rising day by day. Meanwhile, the little great man, experimenting, sends out a few flat boats to test their quality. The day is stormy and unpropitious; but great men like him listen to no remonstrance. The human cargo is launched at a venture. If two or three hundred lives are sacrificed, what is that out of so many?

And so it goes on, the storm thickening and the sky growing charged with thunder-clouds. Crosses of honour are showered by handfuls, banquets given, forts constructed, menacing placards stuck about, although they cannot be seen by the people menaced, and general threats to the stiff-necked islanders by no means economised. But before the hurricane can be quite let loose and the lightnings strike, the spell is broken by one word—Trafalgar! And then, when "Waterloo" has rung in his ears, the little great man gradually fades away, after lingering for a while in the distance confined to a solitary rock.

Our lantern presents another slide. I and my belongings are bundled off, for health and quiet, to the sea. And where do we happen to drop, in the flesh, but at this very identical spot—one of the ports whence the flat-bottomed boats did *not* go forth to victory! What a change! There is no strife or bustle *now*. Gone are the busy troops of the First Napoleon; gone the superior officers, naval and military; vanished are the quays, the locks, the aqueducts, the fosses, the storehouses, the powder-magazines, the workshops, the public fountains. Everything has reassumed its natural and ancient aspect—an arid and desert spot, with nothing but a brook winding through the sand-hills. The wondrous port "created" for the flat-bottomed boats is silted up—filled and encumbered with mud and sand. The boats themselves have long since suffered dissolution. The oaken piles of the basin are wormeaten and split, though tough and strong in their decrepitude. There is hardly a road; paths even are rarities.

Our baggage, in a wheelbarrow, reaches, by a foot bridge, a lodging where nobody would believe that lodgings could contrive to exist. Once installed, we wander unrestrained over breezy downs and along the cliff, with the swallow and the wild bee for our companions, the lark and the linnet for our private band, while the air is perfumed by thyme and furze. Rarely, we meet a withered old man, with a small bronze medal dangling at his coat. It is called the Decoration of St. Helena, but is really a ticket for the other world. The little corporal's column rises in sight, finished, not by him or his, but by a great little man of different race, who preferred his family to France—or say his family's interest to his own—and who was foolish enough to let France see it. But for the view of that monumental pillar—and also for the walking postman—we might fancy ourselves fifty miles beyond the confines of the habitable world. The freehold of a stone-built cot and its surrounding plot of garden-sand, is offered me for eight pounds sterling, and I do not purchase. Think of that, ye building speculators! But I probably make a slight mistake in not so investing eight pounds sterling.

We are independent as islanders. The sea gives us fish and firewood, and occasionally other things besides; for wrecks are far from rare. The bravest ship, once on the rocks, must submit to be sold to be broken up. There are indigenous poultry, pigs, and cows; and I guess that a few of our comforts, if they would confess the truth, are contraband. At least the white counterpane, which covers my bed, was smuggled in with a cargo of coals. Once a week only, by the cliff or the shore, do we venture into town on foot or on donkey-back, returning speedily to the unknown nook, whither Boulogne bathers never think of penetrating.

But there are rumours of troubles in the East. Nicholas of Russia is growing insolent. My view of quiet downs and unexplored sand-hills curdles and changes into something else. The grass is spotted with rows of white tents;

soldiers are swarming in and out. They exercise, and perform sundry labours. They crowd the beach in search of stones. All the way from Boulogne they trace a grey thread, which on closer inspection proves to be a road. They extract the weatherbeaten piles from the choked-up port, and with them construct a solid bridge. The wilderness is opened, the solitude broken up. There are comers and goers, visitors, traffickers. There are curious lookers-on, fine promenaders, carriage company in dainty dresses. It is a whirl, a turmoil, a hubbub, a throng. There is noise in the morning, noise all day, and noise at night; drums and trumpets, and words of command, and shooting-practice, and Dutch concerts by pupils of bands. There is eating and drinking, laughing and love-making, homesickness, camp-sickness, and accidental death.

One day, however, the little corporal's nephew rides in state over the bridge which I knew as a plank; and, taking his place on a grassy knoll, sees defile before him company after company and regiment after regiment, with bands playing and colours flying, and vivandieres accompanying, and crowds following. They go to take part in the Crimean war. They are gone. Another of our views has dissolved. The downs resume their former quiet, the shore its ancient loneliness.

It is noon of July 19, 1866. The grey thread which the soldiers of the camp have drawn across the naked downs, is beaded with dots which slide down its slopes like strings of comets followed by tails of dust. As they approach the hill on which I recline, each dark dot, increasing in size, is visibly fastened to an animal or animals of about the bigness and colour of fleas. They come still nearer; they creep up the hill; they follow each other more and more closely, forming at last a single line fringed with a continuous nimbus of dust. They are at hand; they are here. And lo! they are the crowd of carriages come from Boulogne to witness to-day's and to-morrow's races. Their course is ever marked by a stream of dust like the train of smoke which a meteor ploughs in the air. But dust is the spice of a racing-day road, without which it would lose half its piquancy.

Of these carriages the great majority are open one-horse or two-horse four-wheels. Not that a sufficiency of two-wheels is wanting. There are dog-carts, sociables, butchers' and bakers' rattletaps, with jingling bells on the horses' collars, business vehicles converted into pleasure-chaises, pony-carts and donkey ditto. Also there is an omnibus or two, and a waggonette which, on the race-ground, announces itself as the betting-office. Norris and Dreaves, of Fleet-street, Londres, pay any sum of money immediately after every course, on presentation of the card. Betting here, however, is quite a mild epidemic.

All these carriages had been preceded by a commissariat for the sustenance and refreshment of holiday-makers;—drays consisting of a couple of poles supported on a pair of wheels, at the further end of which, balancing the driver,

cocked-hatted policemen in snow-white trousers do not disdain to ride; nondescript vehicles laden with fruit, although drink-vendors are manifestly in the ascendant. For here follows an English venture filled with a cargo of sandwiches and Cheshire cheese, to excuse the absorption of small beer (very), bitter ale, and Rawlings's soda water (double)—whatever its duplicity may mean—prepared expressly for the Prince of Wales, and sold at the Boulogne races, on this occasion only, by kind permission of his royal highness.

Accompanying, skirting, and following the procession, are pedestrians more mixed in their quality than the grander visitors who roll on wheels. French women toiling under "hottes" or back-baskets containing tons of cherries, currants, and gooseberries; foot soldiers all in blue-bottle uniform, free of joke and fleet of limb; sellers of cakes, male and female; bons bourgeois with their wives and children; single ladies and single gentlemen; lads and lasses by twos, by threes, and by dozens; English youths in loose-going groups; French schoolboys in file, attended by ushers; workpeople in blouses blue or white, with their dames carrying nose-bags and provision-baskets; tourists with purses en bandoulière, containing untold sums of silver and copper; shoeless boys carrying their shoes in their hands, to be put on shiny by-and-by; hobnailed navvies playing truant from their toil; curés in their clerical dress taking their Thursday's recreation; father and son, mother and daughter, father and daughter, mother and son. Amongst the pedestrians, too, we must reckon the dogs, whether snub-nosed, bob-tailed, crook-legged, or crop-eared. The white-woolled loulou, the square built pointer, the graceful retriever, the lop-eared hound, trot along alike intent on business, with determination in their faces to make a day of it.

Then there is a proportion of people on horseback, first of whom are the superb gendarmes. English Amazons, with their attendant papas; masters of equitation, with promising pupils; horse-dealers, with showy animals for sale; young gentlemen, unattached, with veils and without; natty little boys, on their clever ponies; help to make up the goodly show.

The carriage entrance to the course is flanked respectively by the French tricolor and the Union Jack. The symbol of patriotism is thus associated with the token of courtesy to a neighbour. Boulogne enjoys the advantage of using two distinct and separate grounds for her races. To-day's, the more distant and more airy, lies on a lofty plateau commanding the sea; to-morrow's, for the steeple-chase, is sheltered in the verdant valley of Winereux. Here, the north side of the course, appropriated to carriages, is open, at a franc per head, to pedestrian beholders also. But damsels likewise, who have toilettes to show, descend from their vehicular eminence, and walk about, thus combining the correlative virtues of benevolence and hospitality. The south side (admission gratis) is more crowded; while its grassy

offskirts are studded with seated groups, resembling masses of bedding-plants on a lawn.

The language spoken, without being polyglot, is decidedly international. French questions get English answers in reply, and quite as frequently vice versâ. The fashions range widely over time and space. The dust has contributed a sprinkling of hair-powder. There are green-lined umbrellas from the south, and sandals from Spain. There are French blouses, and English pork-pies. And there—can I believe my eyes?—is a well-dressed lady *without* crinoline! Bless her courageous little soul! I forgive her ridiculous chignon for that. But perhaps, after all, she is not so very courageous; only one of the earliest weathercocks to point to the coming change of wind. What a providential dispensation it is, that man, in his insatiation, should think the latest mode the prettiest, the most becoming, the most sensible! Old fashions only are ugly and foolish.

Why should it be that walking-sticks are an article greatly in request? I got here without a walking-stick, and, if they will let me, will try to get back again without one. Why? Unless that Hebrew-faced gentleman desires to distribute them as souvenirs amongst a friendly public. There is also a wonderful supply of watch-chains, glittering in white and yellow metal. Nor are cigars of various quality wanting. Choisissez, messieurs! Choisissez, messieurs! There is likewise sugar-stick and chocolate, for those who cannot live without those sweets.

The trotting-race (saddled) has begun; the least interesting of all, the spectators say. But a glance at the site where it is taking place makes up for its want of interest. There is still the English Channel (whose formation we witnessed a page or two ago), and its consequence, the chalky cliffs of Albion. The Folkestone steamer is coming in, traversing what was once dry ground, and may be dry ground again one of these days. Another consequence, too, lies before us in the wild irregular dunes of that sandy warren. But there is no time to hearken to half the memories which linger around this haunted spot.

The trotting-race in harness would be more amusing if the vehicles (not to mention the horses) had been more presentable and more equally matched. Two of these unfortunates are dragging rumble-tumble gigs, too seedy ever to make their owners respectable. The third, a smart grey, has fastened to him a slight skeleton-gig, consisting merely of shafts and wheels, and a penitential seat for the driver. After the race is over, he could take it on his shoulders and carry it home. But the competitors are soon separated by distances which extinguish all emulation between the competing horses. The race is flat; you see as good at a horse fair. In spite of the applause bestowed on the winner, it is no better than yesterday's champagne or to-morrow's bottled beer before it is up.

The French visitors enjoy the races for the race itself, as well as for its adjuncts; which is the best proof that racing is naturalised in

France. Verily, they are not hard to please, when they take such delight in a race with only three or four competitors. Anything better puts them in ecstasies. To-day's bouquet is the hurdle race. "Here they come! Look, only look! Ils sont partis! Il y a trois ensemble! C'est le bleu qui gagne! Non; c'est le blanc!" What a hubbub! What a roar! And when the hurdles are neatly taken, "Oop! c'est magnifique!" The soldiers dance and jump in the air; the gendarmes lose their à plomb in the saddle. The sergents de ville forget their official capacity, and fancy that they are spectators merely; for the two foremost horses are reaching the winning-post neck and neck. "Qui est-ce qui a gagné, s'il vous plaît, monsieur; qui?" Can it be that perfidious Albion has taught their young ideas how to bet?

But next day, at Wimereux, what velvety turf, what green pastures, what genial weather, what an increased attendance both of butterfly insiders and gratuitous out-pensioners! Some wizard is waving his magic wand and compelling the presence of the slaves of his will. We answer the summons, nothing loth. We come, we come, mighty lord of the revels.

Here I come to show myself, me, my wife, and my lovely daughters. Here I come, too, a bit of a guy, all in white, with trousers too short, a seedy black hat, and a grass-green veil. Here I come, on my high-mettled racer with the mark of a collar on his neck, my jack-boots on in the heat of the dog-days, and my thick-handled whip without a lash. Here I come, with my seventy summers made up for five-and-thirty, with my coal-black wig, my white pantaloons and waistcoat, and a greenhouse bouquet in my button-hole. Here I come, in the blaze of beauty, with a golden chignon and golden curls, with a cloud of muslin floating around me, and a train of textile froth dragging behind. I am irresistible in my loveliness. Look at me, tender-hearted youths, and die. Here I come, fat, fair, and forty, with good humour written on my motherly face, driving my pair with a steady hand, a female Jehu, but cool and collected, and not afraid of being considered a little too stout. Here we come, a medley lot, in a four-in-hand omnibus, inside and out, smart and shabby, young and old. Here we don't come quite (no fault of ours) a young ladies' boarding-school dressed in uniform, with green veils and black paletots. We are not allowed to enter the course, but gaze at the sport over a garden wall. We shall make up for the privation one of these days. When we get bigger, won't we dress! Here we come, the cream of the cream, with a coronet on our carriage door, with folded-armed lackeys and liveried coachman, and fair round baskets with fat capon lined. Here we come all; we come, we come!

The races are over; the course is cleared. There has been no chaff, and there remained no dregs. All are gone home, an orderly throng. The day is rounded with a sleep. And exactly as its events are buried in slumber, so steeples

chases, chignons, and crinoline, shall dissolve, and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a rack behind.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XXXII. ROSS.

How shall be described the soothing comfort which the presence of Diamond brought with it! How, while almost confounded with surprise and astonishment at the presence of Mr. Tillotson down there, he affected with infinite dexterity to accept it as in the natural order of things, rambling on with pleasant conventionalities, until he suddenly stopped himself with much alarm: "Tillotson! you're ill. What's the matter, my dear friend? You're as white as that tablecloth. Let me ring."

Tillotson detained him gently: "I am not well,—that is, not quite well. But tell me about this wretched business—I have strength enough to hear *that*—tell me, *has he gone*?"

"Egad, he has," answered the captain. "He was got away at last—shipped him this morning at ten o'clock. Went off like a trump. He had the good drop in him after all, and behaved like a gentleman."

"Yes," said Mr. Tillotson, with surprising calmness, and pressing his forehead as if in pain; "yes, I see that now—I begin to see. And about last night—tell me quickly. She went down—not by herself?" he added wistfully.

"No!" said the captain, gaily; "not at all. Have you got her note, eh?"

"Got her note!" said Mr. Tillotson, despairingly; "no, no, no. She wrote to tell me she was going down? Is *that* it?"

"My goodness!" said the captain, wondering. "It must have gone astray. Egad! I never was so astonished in my life. Only old Tom the Bolshero is getting so many visits from young and lovely ladies, that I think his head will be turned. I had just got on the dressin'-gown, and was taking the marker out of Thaddeus o' Warsaw, and sitting down for a good two or three pages' read, before putting on the nightcap, when I declare if she wasn't standing before me, with her bonnet on. Says she to me, without a word more, 'Captain Diamond, dear uncle, will you come down with me to-night? Poor Ross is ill or dying, and there isn't a second to be lost; and he has written for me, beggin', beggin'—' 'Gad, then, I will,' said I; 'give me the hand. As far as you like, my dear; and proud I am to see a lady of your spirit.' And in a moment I had the dressin'-gown off, and had slipped into my coat. While I was doing this, egad! she had written a note up to our friend Tilney, the old boy, telling him to take a cab and post off *straight* to you; to make all safe, you know. She's a treasure of sense, so she is."

Another cry broke from Tillotson. All this time the steel bands had been drawing tighter over his chest; all this time the moral tension and the excitement from that terrible night, which had kept him up so far, had been gradually giving way; and now came the discovery of a fatal and irrevocable mistake to overwhelm him. Those strained eyes had closed, and he sank before the alarmed captain in a sort of faint. It had indeed come about as described by the captain.

Nothing could be more delicate than his tone and behaviour to Mrs. Tillotson during the journey. He was always reassuring her—for he saw that she was uneasy—saying, "Now I declare I'm thinking what a time it would be before old Tom would have thought of this. After all, my dear, it's the women that have the heads of sense." Once, in spite of all his caution, something slipped out that made Mr. Tillotson colour, and speak a little vehemently: "Poor Tillotson we supposed *couldn't* manage it. Ill, eh, my dear? Or the business, was it?" He could have cut his tongue out for this speech, he said afterwards.

"It is idle concealing it from you, dear Captain Diamond," said she, excitedly. "You can guess why I should not have consulted *him* in this matter. Latterly these strange unfounded suspicions—"

"Ah, to be sure," said the captain, in great confusion; "quite right; always sensible. The proper thing to do. Of course Tillotson will say it's quite right."

"I only wish to do my duty," she said, calmly. "In this matter I am almost indifferent. If I had gone home—and we had hardly a minute to spare—you know whether I should have been able to come at all. Now that this is to be the last of all this, we may hope that we may begin a new life."

"To be sure, my dear; to be sure," said the captain, reflectively.

In truth he was thinking to himself at that moment, and thinking uneasily, of that "old Bolshero" Tilney. Would he do what he was told? He had a low opinion of that gentleman's ability for practical life, though he liked his company. Old Tilney, he had a suspicion, would go on with his "blatherum," and sit "foostering" there over his wine without stirring. This reflection made him very uneasy; an uneasiness, however, which he was careful to disguise.

By an hour before midnight they had arrived. In a very short time the captain had found out the best hotel, and had driven there; had then, at her request, driven off to an obscure inn, down near the docks, where he, whom they had come to see, was lying. Her heart was in a flutter, but she was quite calm outside. And when the captain was going in *by himself*, "to make sure, you know, that we have got hold of the right shop, my dear," but in truth fearing some bad news, she took his arm and entered the house with him.

The landlord met them, and knew by instinct they were the persons he expected: "I am

very glad you have come," he said; "we don't know what to do. Would you like to go up to him at once?"

"See here, my friend," said the captain, pinching his arm privately; "are you sure, now, we'd better go up first, eh?"

"I don't know what to say, sir," said the innkeeper, "whether he is ill or no. They attacked him in the street and beat him. But he has been up all the day and night, and *says* he is well."

They all went up together: in a small room on the first floor they found him lying on a sofa, with the old wild eyes and inflamed cheeks—now wilder and more inflamed. He gave a cry as *she* entered, and half started up.

"Ah! come at last!" he said. "I knew you would."

He looked as if he were in a fever, and yet he said over and over again that he was well—perfectly well *now*. When he had sent up, he thought he was "done." "A set of blackguards," he said, "insulted me, and when I tried to give them a lesson—and I *marked* some of them finely, I can tell you—they got round me, with sticks, too, and I had nothing, nothing in the world! What could I do against a half-dozen? They *did* give me a beating, though—battered my head in, I believe; and only for our friend there," pointing to the landlord, "it would have been all up with me on the spot."

The landlord explained later to the captain that it was as cruel and cowardly an attack as he ever saw; and that but for him the unfortunate young man had been lying dead there on the paving-stones. He supposed he was now all right—at least he *said* he was.

Ross caught her hand, held it, and looked at her again and again. "So you have come!" he said. "I was sure you would. I knew you wouldn't leave a poor cast-off fellow, driven out of the country, without a hope or a chance! Yes, *he's* done it. He's beaten me at last. The odds were too great. My dear captain—no money—no means—no strength even."

"Nonsense, my boy," said the captain; "you'll get all that where you're going, and come home in a few years full of money and strength—both. That you will."

Ada had been looking at him with gentle pity and sadness. Then she said with some reproach:

"Why did you do this?—send for me in this way? I thought you were ill and dying."

"And so I was," he said, with a strange solemnity. "Before Heaven, I was! As I sit here, I was! Ask the landlord there. Wasn't I insensible for hours? And at this moment," he added, putting his hand to his head, "I don't know what is the matter here. There is a ball of lead there. No matter; they haven't killed me yet."

"Have you seen a doctor?" said she, anxiously; "surely you ought."

"To get me ready to go on board to-morrow. Don't be afraid, you'll be rid of me. If I should be half dying, at twelve to-morrow I'll go. Now, is your mind at rest?"

"No, no," said the captain, "that wouldn't do. See here now, be sensible, and don't let us do things in a hurry. I'll go now and knock up a doctor, and bring him here in no time."

"Stay where you are, captain," said Ross. Then to her: "And so you came down to me—left him and all. I suppose he was storming. O, it was very good of you; very like your own old sweet self. If you hadn't, I'd have gone up to *you*. Doctors, indeed? The sight of you has done me good. What shall I do without you?"

"You are beginning a new life now, dear Ross," she said, gravely, "and are to leave all follies behind. The greatest pride and the greatest good news you can send us is, that you are steady and doing well. If you want to make me happy——"

"How easy you can talk!" he said, starting up. "Listen to her; just listen to her! Steady, indeed! Who made me unsteady? What made me unsteady? What ruined and undone me, and turned me into a wretched outcast? You, Ada! It is your doing. You sold yourself for money, for——"

"Hush!" she answered, in equal excitement; "I did not. It is too late to speak of that."

"Yes, for money," he went on, "and for gratitude, and suffering innocence; and it has served you right. It looks like the judgment good people are always talking of. For where is the money now? and as for the innocence, you know——"

She caught his arm, and with an imploring look, said: "Not here! I know and confess; but not *here*."

He looked at her for a moment with some triumph; then said: "Poor, poor Ada! I am sorry too. We might have been very happy. No matter; as you say, all that is gone and past. The only thing left is to ship me; and you may depend on me for that. Ah, captain, I have been treated cruelly among them all. They have beaten me. She was mine—always meant to be for me. She was, and she knows it; but I do not blame her. My poor Ada! Even as it is, it is better for her. My poor, sweet girl, I shall never, never, see you again. Life seems to be worn out of me. But I have not been so bad altogether. I have been worried, and hunted, and persecuted; and I dare say, if I had got fair play like other fellows, captain, I might have turned out decently. I give you my honour, as a living man, I always laid out, when I had got her, to begin and be good. I did indeed. She would have been the saving of me, and I shouldn't have been the wretched—convict (for they are shipping me like a convict) that I am now."

It was long past midnight when they left him, promising to see him again in the morning down at the ship—the Promised Land—which was to sail at twelve.

CHAPTER XXXIII. HOME AGAIN.

By the time that the Promised Land, long clear of the docks, had cast off her steam-tug, and was well out at sea, with dark-

ness coming on, Mr. Tillotson had been brought to the Royal Albion, where the good-natured landlady was looking out wistfully, and wondering what had kept him. It was the best room in her house, and she was hovering outside the door, good and unsuspecting soul as she was, to hear what a great local doctor, who had been hurriedly sent for, would decide. It was a pity, she thought, that he had no woman's gentle hand to look after him and soothe his pillow, and only that good-natured lame old gentleman.

It had been better, certainly; for the captain, best and most willing of men, could not supply a wife's place; and that wife, Mrs. Tillotson, hurt by ungenerous suspicions, and not knowing that her husband was suffering from anything but a morbid, unjust, and unreasonable fit of suspicion, had gone back straight to London; while that husband, crushed, overwhelmed, had given way to what the excitement of that long, long night had helped him to fight off. The dreadful wounds of all that night had begun to fester; the cruel stabbings he had borne so many hours—all made themselves felt now. He was at last prostrated; and the grand local doctor, Gabbett Watson, Physician to the Royal Dock Hospital, whispered to the captain, "On the lungs, sir. Serious."

It was indeed serious. And yet hopeless, miserable, and abandoned as he was, he would not yet quite "give in." His one wish and prayer was to be "taken home." He had strength for that, he said. The captain had many councils with the good landlady on this point, who repeatedly asked him, "Where was his mother or wife, that she didn't come and nurse him, and London so near?" questions that put the good-natured invention of the captain to all sorts of straits.

"You see," he said, "she's very delicate herself; and, egad! she likes him only too well, ma'am; and, faith, we're trying to keep it from her. You see, ma'am!"

Towards the evening of a lovely sunny day, when not a breath was stirring, and the stinging east winds had hurried off to visit other regions, Mr. Tillotson, looking, as the captain said, "like a ghost," worn and aged with suffering of mind and body, came down to the sitting-room to the astonished captain.

"Do you want to get your death, Tillotson? This is going beyond the beyonds. Go up again, my dear fellow. Go, now."

But Mr. Tillotson said in a whisper, "It is of no use. I cannot rest here. I must go home. Let me go, either to live or die. I cannot get well here. She has abandoned me. But still I am innocent; and before she goes I want to tell her so, and humble myself. I have done her cruel wrong. If I wait another hour, I shall not have strength. I pant to get to my own home again; and I feel this—this thing is growing fast upon me." He put his hand upon his chest, where were the steel bars, now tightened every moment.

The captain said many a "What folly, now, my dear fellow!" and implored him to "get

back to his warm bed" again. But without effect. At last it occurred to him it might be wiser after all to let him have his way. An opinion he was fortified in, when he noticed some faint light coming into Mr. Tillotson's dull eyes, and the very faintest tinge of colour into his cheeks.

The train started at three; and the crowd going to town by that evening train were struck by the shrunken and sickly figure that came on the platform. Yet there was still brightness in the eyes. The prospect of action had given him strength. It was a wonderful victory of spirit over the flesh. In the train, and hardly able to hold up his head, he said to the captain, faintly, "If I can manage only four hours! After that, I don't care." With his usual forethought, the captain had secured a compartment for themselves, and had even taken the precaution of getting a doctor (not, of course, of the great local standing of Gabbett Watson) to accompany them in the train privately for a few miles.

But as the train swept on—it was a very speedy express—the captain's watchful eye saw that his companion was growing worse. At the very first station, when they had been about three-quarters of an hour on the road, and when the doctor came to the carriage, like a common passenger, the captain bade him get in. The doctor was a little alarmed at the change. The light was fading out of Mr. Tillotson's eyes; the excitement was fast waning; the energy that had borne him through so much was weary. The iron bands were tightening: he could not speak—indeed seemed scarcely conscious.

The local doctor put a little bottle to Mr. Tillotson's lips. "We must do all we can to keep him up, just for three-quarters more. Then we shall be at a large town, where we can stop and have good accommodation. If he goes a mile further after that, I wouldn't answer for it."

Utterly overwhelmed, the captain could only murmur, "And this place—where is it?"

"A large cathedral town—St. Alans. There's a good inn there—the White Hart—where they will take care of him. Ah! see, he's better now."

Were not these names two secret talismans, to call back the waning strength of Mr. Tillotson? "St. Alans," he said, eagerly; "where!—who is going to St. Alans!"

"That's right, sir," said the doctor, gladly. "We shall be there in half an hour. We are going to stop there for the night, at the White Hart, if you have no objection."

"Going to St. Alans?" said Mr. Tillotson, lighting up. "Yes, let us stop there. The very place! Take me there!"

"We will, Tillotson," said the captain.

"Going back to St. Alans," repeated Mr. Tillotson, wearily looking from one window, as if to make it out. "It seems as if it were ordered so. It is the spot I would have chosen. This is good news, indeed. Much better than going on to town, I am sure, my dear captain,"

he added, with a curious smile. "I shall find rest there, for I feel very, very tired."

The captain put on his heartiest gaiety.

"What must it be to Tom the Bolshero! I assure you, my dear fellow, his old bones are aching at this moment, and as for the leg," added the captain, with perfect truth, "it's as tender as if you'd been rasping it with a file all night." The doctor was keeping his eye very gravely on Mr. Tillotson.

They were now slackening speed. As they did so, Mr. Tillotson seemed to rouse himself, and with his heavy clouded eyes dragged himself to the window.

"There it is!" he said, eagerly. "I see it! The spire, and the Close." And then he repeated, softly, "Dear St. Alans!"

He was put into a cab, and they drove away up the town.

CHAPTER XXXIV. ST. ALANS.

THE old room was disengaged, as were indeed many old rooms in the White Hart. For the New Railway Hotel, down at the station—but that was a long story of iniquity, as the landlord himself admitted to the doctor. There Mr. Tillotson laid himself down, at last to find rest. Then came the reaction. "My dear captain," he said, "I shall never get out of this place; and now that I am here I am happy."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow," said the captain. "Don't talk stuff."

"No matter, then," said the other, gently. "I am very glad to find myself here again. This is the only spot I ever was happy in, in all my long weary life. O, I was so happy here. And, my dear friend, I might have been happy at this moment; but for my own folly I might have been the most blessed of all men," he added, raising himself; "but I have lost *all* by my own miserable fault. Sweet angel, as she always was, she was right to leave me. Quite right. Still I am very happy to be here. The whole scene makes me think of *her*."

The captain was deeply touched; and, stealing from the room, went to consult Mr. Hiscoke, the landlord. That host directed him to an office round the corner: and there the captain, going into a little compartment which shut him out (he said later it was for all the world as if he was "going to pledge his old watch"), wrote a telegram. It ran thus:

"My dear Child. Come down here. Our friend Tillotson is not well, and wants to see you to make all square. Come; if only for old Tom's sake."

This message the clerk, who was much pleased with the captain and his pleasant manner, promised should go at once, in preference to all other messages. It was delivered to Mrs. Tillotson within half an hour, at a station some twenty miles away. In half an hour more the captain was limping in to his friend with glasses on his nose, and a bit of tissue paper in his hand, and very joyfully read it out to him.

"Listen to this, my dear boy. See here: 'Dearest husband!' you know who that is.

Let me see again—yes. 'Dearest husband, I am flying to you. I shall be with you in two or three hours.—Your fond wife, ADA.' You know who that is! She's a fine, noble girl; I always said so. My God! how women—the creatures—make us blush! They do!"

Mr. Tillotson caught the tissue paper from him, and let his dim eyes fall on the characters. But they were not hers, though the words were. He felt very happy, though the bands were tightening fast.

The captain had gone down to the coffee-room for a moment, when a florid, bald, good-humoured gentleman, much blown and heated, came up to him.

"Sorry to hear this sir," he said, "about Mr. Tillotson. I knew him, but I knew Mrs. Tillotson much better. If ever there was an angel on this earth, and certainly in this ungodly town, she was one. In our family we worship her for a saint. My name is Norbury, sir." The captain bowed. "And I'll tell you what I've come up here for, sir. You knew Tilney, who used to live—"

"Well, well," said the captain; "he often drops in to have his little drop o' sherry with me."

"Yes," said Norbury, "that *is* Tilney. Well, sir, they had a sweet little house, just off the Close, in front of the cathedral, sir, when she, Miss Millwood, was with them. At that time *we* were all stuck in a little hutch of a hole, sir—I, and the children, and the wife, sir. For there was a fellow called Topham that used to persecute the canons like the early Christians. We have got rid of him; and, thank Heaven, we have all mended since and looked up a good bit. And 'tis only last week I was able to take, at a good rent, the little place the Tilneys had. It's looking lovely now; running wild, sir, with flowers, and woodbine, and delicious scents. It would do your heart good to see it."

"I am quite sure of that," said the captain, a little mystified, and not knowing what all this was coming to. "Egad, I am sure it looks beautiful."

"Well, I tell you what, sir. We were going in next week—the wife and the children; and the children are literally tearing wild to get there,—there's no holding them, sir. But I've come up now to say, that I know Mrs. Tillotson loves the place, and Mr. Tillotson above all; and they are heartily welcome to it. It is ready for him to step into, and we could take him down there at once. You see, Captain Diamond, a hotel like this, though Hiscoke is well enough, is *hardly* the place for—"

The captain took his hand and wrung it heartily. "You're a Christian, Mr. Norbury—began you are. The very thing! Do you know, it's been weighing on me all this time what we were to do with our poor friend up-stairs. As you say, a hotel don't do. Shall we move him at once?"

The captain limped up straight, and entered softly. Mr. Tillotson was lying on a sofa. "Too soon," he said faintly, "as yet, to expect her."

"No, not that, my dear friend, exactly," said

the captain. "But what would you say to a little place, with a garden, and the honeysuckles, and small panes of glass, and a little gate in front, and a view of the church always in front? There's a gentleman here come to let us have the loan of it until you get well, and——"

"Why," said Mr. Tillotson, lifting himself eagerly, "that must be *their* place—the Tilneys'. Ah! Impossible!"

"The very same," said the captain; "ready there to step into. Nothing could be handsomer of Mr. North or Norbury—egad, I am no hand at names. And he says it's looking lovely at this moment; all over roses, and fruits, and flowers, and honeysuckle, so that you can't see a patch of the house itself. Why, I'd buy it if I had money, to-morrow, my dear boy——"

In less than an hour more, sick Mr. Tillotson was lying in the parlour of the little rustic house. It was now literally overgrown with flowers. Opposite was the great cathedral, rising with a soft magnificence that, even in all his pains, quite soothed him. It was drawing on towards night. Presently the captain suddenly started mysteriously, and went softly to the door. There was a softer sound upon the gravel of the little walk; yet not so soft as but the dull ear of the sick man had caught it. He half lifted himself on his sofa. "I hear her," he said; "she has come! Ah, angel, sweetest comforter!" As he spoke, he lifted his arms; for the door had opened, and she, the true angel and comforter, and who had soothed and brought life and comfort to so many, now came floating in—was by his side in a moment, bending over him. Then, with the little diamond-paned windows open, through which were wafted in the overpowering scent of flowers; through which could be seen the subdued blue of fading evening and the yellow pile with its great windows transparent as lanterns. It seemed, indeed, the old days again, before suspicion and worldliness, and trouble, and harassing disquietude had entered in. It seemed a tranquil dream.

CHAPTER XXXV. MR. TILLOTSON FINDS REST.

YET sweet as were these dreams, they were scarcely so sweet and peaceful as those closing hours. It was like the cool calm evening of a long, long sultry day; and Mr. Tillotson, in that delicious retreat, felt like a weary and footsore wayfarer, who had been worn out with toiling on through the dust, and had now sunk beside a fountain. Yet he was not sorry. His had been indeed a weary life. The doctor had reluctantly pronounced that he could do nothing—that fatal night and the stabbing winds had done their work too securely on his delicate chest. There was really no hope. A heavy congestion was mounting steadily from his chest upward.

The faithful captain could not conceal his trouble; and though performing wonders considering his years, and being a prodigy of usefulness, although he depreciated all his efforts in the most disrespectful tone—"We'll have you on your legs again this day three weeks,

please God. Wait until you see what Sir Duncan, the Queen's own feller, will say. He's the boy. Why, I had the same thing—my chest rammed up like an old musket—and faith, I thought I might as well be ordering my coffin, when he came, and with a touch made all right. Wait, I say, for the Queen's Own. He's the boy."

This was only to comfort Mrs. Tillotson, now in sore trouble; yet doing her duties with calm impassibility. But when she came near her husband, her face lit up with a light and interest he had never noticed before; and which, though she did not speak, an instinct told him was affection. "I am so, so happy," he said to her again and again, and holding her hand; "I have never been so happy in my life;" and he added, with that low whisper in which he could only speak, "I think this all cheaply purchased by that night!"

Alas! here was the "Queen's Own"—having snatched a few precious hours, valued at so many golden guineas an hour—come down to pass his judgment, and send a chill to the faithful captain; not indeed that he affected for his friend any extravagant regard, feeling that for "men" in general this thing *was* to come; that "every fellow" had his chance: "to-day, you—to-morrow, me;" with more of the same rough philosophy. But with women it was wholly different—the old gentle chivalry of the captain stepped in and "made his old heart bleed," as it was doing now for Mrs. Tillotson. "How," he said to Sir Duncan, "how can she be told—the gentle noble girl—all she has gone through!—and the pair of them, doctor, between you and me, just beginning to find out that they love each other! Try and do something—do!"

This was as though Sir Duncan was unwilling to save the patient when he could do so. "My dear friend," he said, gravely, "you have been a soldier, and it's of no use talking fine phrases. The man can't last; I couldn't give him," added Sir Duncan, dropping his voice and looking at his watch, as if to read the number of days there—"I couldn't give him two days more—if so much."

The captain was agast. "And what's to become of her?" Sir Duncan himself, seizing a favourable opportunity, humanely undertook the task of telling Mr. Tillotson this fatal news. This he did in a plain business-like way—not "unfeelingly," as some of his enemies said—for he had made the same announcement to some thousands in his experience. Mr. Tillotson welcomed this news very cheerfully; and told Sir Duncan that he knew of it a week ago; and begged him "not to tell her."

On the night of this official declaration, Mrs. Tillotson, unwearied, unfulfilling, gentle, was sitting by him—her sweet face bending over him. It was about ten o'clock. The diamond-paned windows were half open, and a band of rich and golden orange streaked the sky across, passing behind the cathedral, being seen through the transparent windows, and forming a rich ribbon of gorgeous light at the back of the tall

black trees. There was an ineffable stillness abroad; the little common between, spread out like a tranquil waste, and every now and again was seen the noiseless figure of a canon returning tranquilly to his home. At this moment the sick Mr. Tillotson raised himself, and looking up into her face, told her calmly the news he had heard that day. "I am very sorry to leave you, my dear," he said. "Had this come a year ago, I should have hailed it with delight. But it is better now than, perhaps, a year hence; when I know I could not have endured the thought of parting with you at all. For I feel that *now*, indeed, we were going to be happy; and though I have often deceived myself," he added, smiling, "with a hope that I was at last going to be really happy, still I knew that I was not to be deceived this time; the clouds were at last gone, and I should have liked to live on now! But it is not to be."

He went on, after a moment's pause: "I only think of *you* and your generous sacrifice to me—your sweet precious life thrown away—victim to my selfishness. But I shall atone for all now: and I am glad, because this releases you. Yes: releases you," he went on, in increasing agitation; for I was *not* one that should have approached you. I was not worthy to have touched the edge of your sleeve."

"Dearest husband, no!" she interrupted; "it was just the opposite. It was all my wretched folly."

"Hush!" he said, gently, taking her hand; "you do not understand me. I was not worthy. I was not fit. O! I—I—deceived you cruelly. You know not what you married; you know not the miserable thing that you, so pure, so innocent, married. But if repentance and suffering—sincere repentance and bitter suffering—can atone, why I have tried; what that will not do—"

She interrupted him hastily. "Let us not think of this now," she said; "we have all enough to account for. As for deceiving me, I always knew there was a secret—some old folly—"

"Folly!" said he; "too gentle a term—guilt—*crime*!"

"No matter what the name," she went on, hastily; "it was repented of and atoned for. But, dearest husband, you recollect that evening, in this very house, when you rose and left the room so suddenly. I knew *then* there was some mystery. I have known it ever since. Let me accept it for its worst—and suppose that I have accepted it for its worst. Do not let it trouble you. If it was the darkest crime in the calendar, it has been atoned for and repented of: and so, dearest husband, dismiss it—put it far away from you, as I have done, and let it not trouble us more."

He looked at her with a transport of affection; caught her hand and kissed it softly—"O! you have taken from me the weariest load. For years, and for these last days especially, all this has been before me. For I felt I *must* make open confession and relieve my

weary soul. Now, indeed, I am at rest. From the beginning to the end, from the first moment I knew you and saw you, your name is to be associated with peace."

He was growing weary, and she was just rising—as she always did on such symptoms—to leave him to rest a little, when, as she turned, she saw a shadow pass across the window, between her and the golden ribbon of orange that spread across the sky. The shadow was the figures of two men, who had come up the little walk. She now heard their steps and their voices in the hall. An indefinable dread came over her—she knew not why—perhaps from her old associations in the Tilney days, of that visit of "men" on the day of the Tilney party. She passed out softly to meet them. As she saw them, she gave a half cry: that fiery face and wild eyes were known to her in a second.

"This is fine work," he said, in an excited voice; "nice, to keep me hunting you over the country up and down, and no account of you!"

"Hush!" she said, in an agony of terror, pointing to the door; "he is ill, he is dying; they only told us so to-day; go, go away; go away at once."

"Fine story," said Eastwood, contemptuously; "I know—quite understand that sort of thing. If he is in there," he added, raising his voice, "so much the better; no fooling with me. Do you know how you have been treating me, leaving me up there without a penny? I might have starved, for *all* you cared. But see here, I want no hushing up or keeping quiet. I want an open, straightforward settlement. I have done nothing to be ashamed of, that I am to be working underground in this way. Here, Mrs. Tillotson, let me see this sham-sick man of yours. *He'll* understand me—never fear."

But she stood between him and the door, with her hand on the handle. "You *must* not," she said, firmly; "I tell you, he is dying. Mr. Grainger, Mr. Grainger! *you* will help me here, and protect us from this cruel intrusion."

Mr. Grainger only shrugged his shoulders. "I am powerless, Mrs. Tillotson; you have no claim on me, either."

"Take care she doesn't pack *you* out of the country, as she managed with that poor devil Ross. That was a nice exploit! No, no; the days of humbugging are over."

"What *shall* I do!" said she, clinging to the door. "I tell you, you will kill him if you disturb him now. How ungenerous of *you*, how ignoble! O! is there no one to help me?"

There was. Mrs. Tillotson saw our captain closing the little gate, and he seemed now to be a true deliverer. "Uncle, uncle dear, help us; quick! There are these people want to force themselves in—and you know—"

She had not left the handle of the door, but called this to him as he came up the little walk.

Shading his eyes with his hand, he recognised "Eastwood, the lad," at once. "Begad, they shall not, my dear," he said, cocking the bishop's hat very fiercely: he had his stout stick too. "Stand back, you pair of blackguards; is that

the way to behave to a lady? Take your hat off, sir, or I'll knock it off for you in two seconds."

"Pish!" said the other, contemptuously; "I don't mind *you*. I could make the whole set of you change your note in two minutes; so be civil, my own old gentleman; this is not the Continent."

"You infernal scoundrel!" said the captain, giving the crown of his bishop's hat a violent bang, "how dare you talk of the Continent? You behaved like a blackleg. You did murder there; and if there was law or justice——"

The other interrupted him in a fury.

"Murder, and law, and justice; you'd better not talk of that in this house! We'll see what's to be said about *that*; and you shall hear, too. The time's gone by, old fellow, for humbugging. We had enough of that for these fifteen years."

The captain replied in a low voice, completely changing his manner. "Come with me. I tell you, the man's dying. He'll hear you."

But the door was now drawn away from her hand, and the pale face and tottering figure of Mr. Tillotson stood there looking out on them.

"Let them come in," he said, in a low broken whisper. "It is better to convince them. It is better to have it over. I knew it would come to this. I was sure of it. Indeed, it was a fit retribution. I was hoping to have died in peace; but——"

"And have taken this secret to the grave with you, Tillotson? But you brought it all on yourself. If you had behaved open-hand and above-board with me, I should have stood by you, and no one should have known of this business, from *me* at least. A man must live; and, recollect, it was you who ruined me. I appeal to him here if that's not true. I'd have had an estate now, and been happy and rich, only that my father turned me off, and cut me out all on account of a business of his—a secret."

"It shall be a secret no longer," said Mr. Tillotson. "I tell it here—before all. It is a right humiliation for me."

"Better take care," said the other; "you're not obliged, you know. Think twice."

He took his wife's hand. "I shall leave you no legacy of terrorism. These men shall not have it in their power to persecute you. You have guessed it, indeed, and can think no worse of me. In a word, when I was young I fell into bad ways and bad courses, and was the wildest and most dissipated of my friends—all but broke my poor parents' hearts——"

"Now think twice," said Eastwood. "It's no use, you know. Stop there; take my advice."

"Twice I broke away from them and outraged them in every way; and twice they forgave. Finally—let me hurry to this—I went to Paris; got into worse company there. I got infatuated with a boyish passion—O, forgive me this humiliation of you—and was beaten unworthily even in that contest by one older than I was, and whom that moment I hated with a hate that could only be satisfied with blood. But he avoided me instinctively,

and at last fled from Paris. I, urged by some devil" (Eastwood gave a sort of laugh. "A compliment to me: I was with him!"), "pursued him, then got on his track, and at last hunted him down at a little Italian town—Spezia. Ah! you shrink from me, dear."

Up to this point her hand had been in his. He had felt it fluttering and trembling. Now, when he mentioned that Italian name, she started, and half drew it away.

"Nothing, nothing," she said, hastily. "Go on."

"Yes," he said, "let me finish. A sentence will do it. That very night, behind the garden of the hotel, I shot him in what was called a duel, but what was a cruel, unfair, cold-blooded—O God, forgive me!"

She had now drawn her hand away, for she was covering her face with both her hands. When he raised his eyes, they fell on her again.

"Yes," he said, "it is right. You *must* shrink from me."

"No, indeed," she said, with a faltering voice; "it is not that."

"It is not that?" he repeated. "No matter. That is not all. He had left a little girl, this murdered man. I know what became of her, a fond darling, that worshipped him. She died of it, they told me. So that also is on my soul——" He stopped, for she had turned away her face. "No wonder!" he said, sadly. "I told you, recollect. So I could not ask her forgiveness. But there may be forgiveness for all three yet."

It had grown darker, and no one spoke. The golden streak had cooled out, and there was now the moon up, and a great waste of deep, colder blue. He put out his hand. "Ah! she has gone!" he said; "she has left me! I told her and warned her that she would not bear to hear the truth!"

She had, indeed, glided from the room. Could they have seen her a moment later, they would have seen her on her knees, with her face down on a chair, weeping and praying convulsively. In another moment she rose and dried her eyes, and prepared to return. She lit the lamp and brought it in with her.

When she entered, she found the room silent and cleared. They were gone. The captain had got them away. The dying Mr. Tillotson saw her enter, as he had so often seen her enter, bearing the light—herself soft light. She ran to him, as if answering all the doubt, grief, and pain she saw in that worn face, and put her arms about him.

There was a faint sparkle glittering over in the cathedral, and sounds of music came floating dreamily into the room (for the organist had just gone in to practise). The doubt, the grief, and the pain all passed away in a moment, as if by the touch of an amulet. She heard him whisper, "Ah! you forgive me?"

Then kneeling down beside him, she put her face close, quite close, to his cheek, and forcing those sweet lips into a smile of fervour, she whispered:

"The little girl lives, and from *her heart and soul* forgives!"

He half lifted himself and turned to her. In her face he read all. The light seemed to play on the golden hair as on a glory, and a fuller swell of the organ came sweeping in at the window, fluttering the honeysuckle-leaves.

L'ENVOI.

WE may look back to the personages of this story some five years later. By that time we can see the Second Mrs. Tillotson moving in a world of gentle charities and good works, soft, melancholy, practical—with excellent means, too, for her labours; for out of the wreck of the Fancier much had been recovered, and the provident care of Mr. Tillotson had secured her, as the world said. Ross had taken away with him, as perhaps the reader will have anticipated, the fruit of a desperate injury, which his fierce nature and the excitement of that departure had refused to let him yield to.

The monotony of the sea had set in; he began to eat his heart out; and only one day after sailing he was found in the morning dead in his berth—the ship doctor said, "from a suffusion of blood on the brain."

It was wonderful how his strange wild spirit had fought off so long as twenty-four hours the consequences of such internal injuries; but his indomitable pride and energy would not let him "give in," even to sleep. Only that the Great Enemy stole upon him unawares, he would have fought his last battle with *him*, as he had done so many battles all his life, and have met him standing up, and defiant. Under all the violence and ill-conditioned fury which has marked his nature through the course of this story, the reader may have seen certain fair impulses overpowered by stronger untrained impulses. His "own fellows" heard of his end with regret—not the worst testimonial to a man's character; and at the mess such epitaphs as, "Not a bad fellow," "There are worse in the world," "No one's enemy but his own," and "Deuced good hearted, after all," went round very freely.

His unfortunate end pointed many a moral—in Mr. Tilney's mouth. Friends that did not know his good heart so well as those who have been listening to him so patiently throughout these pages, might go so far as to say that he actually enjoyed the fate of his kinsman. He revelled in the details, which he unfolded again and again in his club. For the bounty of his ward now helped him to many more luxuries besides a club; and in the evening of his life he was known to come back again to his older and kindlier view of a late Royal "Dook," and of the Court generally. But the example of Ross was turned to exceeding profit. "My young friend, ah! I could tell you of a momentous case out of my own family. As fine a young man as you ever saw. Made to be about a Court, but self-willed. My dear friend, there's

not a sparrow falls, not a drop leaves the house-top, without an All-seeing Eye." In this religious tone of resignation it may be supposed that he accepted his own lot unrepiningly. For things at home were grown very uncomfortable, owing, perhaps, to what one of the Fancier clerks would have called "a tightness" in the nuptial market. The securities were offered freely; but, alas! there were no buyers. A fretfulness, a repining, a snappishness, had set in, which rendered the domestic hearth unpleasant for Mr. Tilney. Most unreasonable treatment: for he had laboured with the others in the heats—and the failure was not on his head.

No such trouble clouded the days of The Captain, with whom the writer is as loth to part as he was with the original true heart, of which the character given in these pages is but a faint sketch. Still can we see him and think of him in his old faithful round; not growing dull and insensible, and possibly selfish—which is but the nature of age—but rather more delicately sensitive to the wants and feelings of others. We can look back, and see him, in his little measured and orderly round of duties, going forth at the fixed hour, bright and brushed, and with the shovel-hat all but cocked; or, busy with his tools, repairing; or, busier still, in his dressing-gown, with the moderator drawn close, and the glasses on the high Roman nose, and the thin lips repeating earnestly, and with a respect almost devotional, the words of THADDEUS OF WARSAW; or, better still, we might sit by him and hear him read aloud his daily paper, which he would do when pressed, and which he did with a certain pleasant laboriousness, setting off the strange facts which daily papers do sometimes contain with simple and delightful comment, such as: "See that, now! Was sentenced to six months' imprisonment—the creature!—and her child with her too! That seems hard on her—now, doesn't it? Egad, Mr. Magistrate, you went too far that time." Or again: "'Coming round the corner, the horse slipped, and fell.' Many's the time that's happened to me. He should have kept his head well up, and slackened a little, my dear." Or we can see him standing up in "the frock," much stooped, for he suffered more than he ever admitted with what he called "the leg," but which was the hip properly; and feeling nervously at the little crimson-silk purse, the friend that he was always ready to call on. The image of that genial, amiable figure I could wish to be the last image on the reader's mind as he lays down this volume; and the last words written here shall be the name of CAPTAIN DIAMOND.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

CHAPTER II. IN THE HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM.

GEORGE DALLAS had eaten but sparingly of the food which Mrs. Brookes had placed before him. He was weary and excited, and he bore the delay and the solitude of the housekeeper's room with feverish impatience. He strode up and down the room, stopping occasionally before the fire to kick at the crumbling logs, and glance at the clock, which marked how rapidly the night was waning. Half an hour, which seemed three times as much to him, had elapsed since Mrs. Brookes had left him. Faintly and indistinctly the sounds of the music reached him, adding to his irritation and weariness. A savage frown darkened his face, and he muttered to himself in the same tone as that of his spasmodic soliloquy in the avenue:

"I wonder if she's thinking that I ought to be there too; or if I ought not, neither ought she. After all, I'm her son, and she might make a stand-up fight for me, if she would. He's fond of her, the old woman says, and proud of her, and well he may be. What's the use of it all, if she can't manage him? What fools women are! If they only could calculate at first, and take their own line from the beginning, they could manage any men. But she's afraid of him, and she lets him find it out. Well, well, it must be wretched enough for her, too. But why does she not come?"

He had to wait a little longer yet, for another quarter of an hour had elapsed before Mrs. Brookes returned.

"Is she coming?" he asked eagerly, when at length the pale-faced little woman gently entered the room.

"Yes, she is coming. She has to wait until the first lot are gone in to supper. Then master will not miss her."

The old woman came up to him, and took his right hand in hers, looking fondly, but keenly, into his face, and laying the other hand upon his shoulder. "George," she said, "George, my darling boy, I hope you have not brought her very bad news."

He tried to laugh as he loosed his hand, not unkindly, from the old woman's grasp.

"Do you suppose good news would have

brought me here, where I am forbidden—smuggled goods?"

She shook her head sorrowfully.

"At all events, you are alive and well to tell your ill news yourself, and that is everything to her," said Mrs. Brookes.

The next moment the door opened, and Mrs. Carruthers came in with a hurried step. George Dallas started forward, and caught her in his arms.

"Mother! mother!"

"My boy, my darling boy!" were the only words spoken between them, until they were quite alone.

Mrs. Brookes left the room, and the young man was free to explain his untimely visit.

"I dread to ask what brings you here, George," said his mother, as she seated herself upon the heavy sofa, and drew him to her side. "I cannot but rejoice to see you, but I am afraid to ask you why you come."

A mingling of pleasure and apprehension shook her voice, and heightened her colour.

"You may well dread to ask me, mother," replied the young man, gloomily. "You may well dread to ask what brings me, outcast as I am, to your fine home, to the place where your husband is master, and where my presence is forbidden."

"George, George!" said his mother, in a tone of grief and remonstrance.

"Well. I know it's no fault of yours, but it's hard to bear for all that, and I'm not quite such a monster as I am made out to be, to suit Mr. Carruthers's purposes. I'm not so very much worse than the young men, mother, whose step-fathers, or whose own fathers either, don't find it necessary to forbid them the house. But you're afraid of him, mother, and——"

"George," said Mrs. Carruthers, quietly, but sternly, "you did not come here to see me for the first time in nine months, at the risk of being turned out of Mr. Carruthers's house, simply to vent your anger upon him, and to accuse me wrongfully, and taunt me with what I am powerless to prevent. Tell me what has brought you here. I can stay with you only a little while; at any moment I may be missed. Tell me what has brought you against my husband's commands, contrary to my own entreaties, though it is such a delight to me to see you even so." And the mother put her arms around the neck of her prodigal son, and

kissed him fondly. Her tears were falling on his rough brown curls.

"Don't cry over me, mother; I'm not worth it; I never was; and you mustn't go back to your company with pale cheeks and red eyes. There, there, it's not as bad as it might be, you know; for, as nurse says, I'm alive and well to tell it. The fact is——" He rose, and walked up and down the room in front of the sofa on which his mother was sitting, while he spoke. "The fact is, I must have money. Don't start, don't be frightened. I have not done anything very dreadful, only the consequences are nearly as fatal as if I had. I have not stolen, or forged, or embezzled property. I am not rich or respectable enough to get the chance. But I have lost a large sum at the gaming-table—a sum I don't possess, and have no other means than this of getting."

"Go on," said his mother. She was deadly pale now, and her hands were tightly clasped together, as they lay on her lap, white and slender, against the rich purple of her velvet dress.

He glanced at her, quickened his step, and continued in a hard reckless tone, but with some difficulty of utterance. "I should have been utterly ruined, but for a friend of mine, who lent me the money. Play debts must be paid, mother; and Routh, though he's not much richer than I am, would not let me be completely lost for want of a helping hand. But he had to borrow the money. He could get it lent to him. There's no one but him to lend me a shilling, and he did get it, and I had it and paid it away. But in a short time now he must pay it back, and the interest upon it. Luck has been against us both."

"Against you *both*, George," said Mrs. Carruthers. "Is your friend also a gambler, then?"

"Yes, he is," said Dallas, roughly; "he is a gambler. All my friends are gamblers and drunkards, and everything that's bad. What would you have? Where am I to get pious, virtuous, respectable friends? I haven't a shilling; I haven't a character. Your husband has taken care I shall have no credit. Every one knows I am disowned by Mr. Carruthers, and forbidden to show my face at Poynings: and I'm not showing it; I'm only in the servants' quarters, you see." Again he laughed, and again his mother shrank from the sound. "But though my friend is a gambler, like myself, he helps me when I want help, and inconveniences himself to do it. Perhaps that's more than respectable friends—if I had them—would do for me. It's more than I have ever known respectable friends do for any one."

Mrs. Carruthers rose, and turned her colourless face upon her son. There was an angry light in her large hazel eyes, whose dewy brightness time had not yet greatly harmed. As they confronted each other, a strong likeness between the mother and son asserted itself. "George," she said, "you are putting me to needless pain. You have said enough to show me that you are unchanged. You have come

here, endangering my peace, and compromising yourself, for the purpose, I suppose, of asking me for money to repay this person who relieved you from a gambling debt. Is this your business here?"

"Yes," he said, shortly, and with a lowering brow.

"Then listen to me. I cannot give you any money." He started, and came close up to her. "No, George. I have no money at my disposal, and you ought to know that, as well as I know it. Every shilling I have ever had of my own, I have given you. You know I never grudged it. You know you had it all; but that leaves me without resources. Mr. Carruthers will not help you." She grew paler still, and her lips trembled. "I have asked him many times to alter his determination, a determination which you cannot say is undeserved, George, but it is in vain. I might, perhaps, wonder that you would stoop to take assistance from a man who has such an opinion of you, and who has forbidden you his house, but that the sad knowledge I have gained of such lives as yours has taught me that they utterly destroy self-respect—that a profligate is the meanest of creatures. Calm yourself. There is no use in giving loose to your temper towards me, George. You have the power to afflict me still, but you can deceive me no more."

She sat down again, wearily, leaning her arm on the back of the sofa, and her head on her hand. There was silence for a few moments. Then she said:

"How much money do you owe this man, George, and when must it be paid?"

"I owe him a hundred and forty pounds, mother, and it must be paid this day month."

"A hundred and forty pounds!" repeated Mrs. Carruthers, in a terrified tone.

"Yes; precisely that sum, and I have not a pound in the world to exist on in the mean time. I am cleaned out, that's the fact," he went on, with a dismal attempt at speaking lightly; "and I can't carry on any longer." But he spoke to inattentive ears. His mother was lost in thought.

"I cannot give you money," she said, at length. "I have not the command of any."

"This doesn't look like want of it," said her son, bitterly, as he caught a handful of her velvet dress in his grasp, and then dropped it scornfully.

"My personal expenses are all dictated by Mr. Carruthers, George, and all known to him. Don't suppose I am free to purchase dress or not, as I choose. I tell you the exact truth, as I have always told you." She spoke coldly and seriously, like one whose mind is made up to a great trial, who hopes neither to alter its character nor to lessen its weight.

"I only know I must have it," he said, "or I don't see any resource for me except to cut my throat."

"No, no," returned his mother, "do not say such dreadful things. Give me time. I will try to find some way of helping you by the time

you must have the money. Oh, my boy, my boy!" She covered her face with her hands and sobbed.

George Dallas looked at her irresolutely, then came quickly towards her, and leaned over her, as she sat. "Mother," he said, in low hurried tones, "mother, trust me once more, little as I deserve it. Try to help me in this matter; it is life or death to me; and I will try and do better. I am sick of it all; sick of my own weakness above and more than all. But I am irretrievably ruined if I don't get this money. I am quite in Routh's power, and—and—I want to get out of it."

She looked up curiously at him. Something in the way he said those words at once alarmed and reassured her.

"In this man's power, George? How? To what extent?"

"I cannot tell you, mother; you would not understand. Don't frighten yourself about it. It is nothing that money cannot settle. I have had a lesson now. You shake your head—well, I know I have had many before, but I *will* learn from this one."

"I have not the money, George," his mother repeated, "and I cannot possibly procure it for a little time. You must not stay here."

"I know, I know," he retorted. "You need not re-echo Mr. Carruthers's interdict. I am going; but surely you can give me a little now; the price of one of these things would go a long way with me." As he spoke, he touched, but with no rough hand, her earrings and the bracelet on her right arm.

"They are family jewels, or you should have them, George," Mrs. Carruthers said, in a sad voice. "Give me time, and I will make up the money for you. I have a little I can give you." She stood up and looked fixedly at him, her hands resting on his shoulder. The tall and powerful young man, with his haggard anxious face, his hardened look, his shabby careless dress, offered a strange contrast to the woman, whose beauty time had dealt with so lightly, and fortune so generously. Mrs. Carruthers had been a mere girl when her son was born, and probably had not been nearly so beautiful as now, when the calm dignity of position and the power of wealth lent all their attractions to her perfect face and form.

The habitual seriousness of her expression was but a charm the more, and in moments of excited feeling like the present she regained the lustrous brilliancy of the past. Searchingly, fondly, she gazed into her son's face, as though reading it for traces of the truth of his promises, seeing in it but too surely indications of the weary, unsatisfying life he had led, the life which had brought disappointment to all her dearest maternal hopes. Steadily and tenderly he looked at her, a world of regret in his eyes. While they stood thus in brief silence, Mrs. Brookes came in hurriedly.

"You are wanted," she said. "Master is asking for you; he has sent Miss Clare to your room to see if you are ill."

"I must go, my boy," said Mrs. Carruthers, as she hastily kissed him; "and you must not stay. Come with me, Ellen, for a moment. Wait here, George, for what I promised you, and don't travel back to town without an overcoat." Then she left the room at once, the housekeeper with her. George stood where she had left him, looking towards the door.

"My dear practical mother," he said to himself, "she is as kind and as sensible as ever. Wretched about me, but remembering to desire me to buy a coat! I know she will get me the money somehow, and this *shall* be the last scrape I will get into. It's no use being melodramatic, especially when one is all alone, but I here make a solemn promise to myself that I will keep my promise to *her*."

He sat down by the fire, and remained still and thoughtful. In a few minutes Mrs. Brookes returned.

"Here's the money, Master George," she said. "I was to give it to you with my mistress's love, and she will write to you to London."

He took the folded paper from her hand. It was a ten-pound note.

"Thank you, nurse," he said; "and now I will go. I would like to stay and have a talk with you; but I had better get away, lest any annoyance should come to my mother through my staying. I'll see you when you come up to town to the fine house in Mesopotamia. Eh?"

"Lord, Master George, how you do go on! Why, Mr. Carruthers's new house is the far side of the Park."

"I know, nurse. It's all the same thing. No. No more wine, thank you, and nothing to eat. Good-bye.—How am I to get out, though? Not through the window, and up the area wall, am I?"

"I'll show you, Master George. This way."

George Dallas buttoned his coat tightly across his breast, carefully put on his gloves, and took up his hat. As he followed Mrs. Brookes through the long stone passages of the basement story, he looked curiously about him, noting the details of comfort and convenience. "How much better off than I am my mother's servants!" he thought, idly rather than bitterly. When they reached a door which opened upon the court-yard, Mrs. Brookes bade him farewell, not without emotion.

"The great gates are open," she said. "All the servants are either in the hall or the servants' hall. None of the carriages have been called yet. You can slip past without being seen; or if any one sees you, they'll think you belong to the place."

"A serious mistake, dear old woman," said George, with a half smile, as he once more shook her hand, and stepped out into the cold and darkness. A bitter sense of desolation came over him as the door closed behind him. The court-yard was empty, except of carriages, and he crossed it quickly, and went through the great gates into the avenue, which swept round the terrace. Following it, he found himself brought again by a different route in front of

the lighted ball-room; but he did not delay to glance at the scene.

"So I am going away," he said to himself, "richer by ten pounds and my mother's promise. Stop, though! There's the sprig of myrtle. I must not forget or lose the unconscious gift of the great heiress. I wish I had asked nurse what sort of girl she is. I might have taken time to do that. It's not so cold as it was." He had been warmed and fed, and his spirits had risen. It did not take much to raise George Dallas's spirits, even now when the excesses of his wasted life were beginning to tell upon him. "I feel quite strong again. The night is lighter; the village must be a wretched place. I have a great mind to push on to Amherst. It's only seven miles, and Carruthers can't hear that I have been there; but he might hear of me at the village, and bother my mother about it."

He took his way down the avenue and reached the gate, which lay open. One feeble light twinkled from the upper window of the gate lodge. Bulger and family had retired to rest, the excitement of the arrivals being over; and Bulger would leave the gate to take care of itself until morning. Unquestioned, unseen, George Dallas left Poynings, and, turning to the right under the park wall, set forth at a steady pace towards Amherst.

The town of Amherst is very much like the other towns in that part of the country. Close by the railway station lies the Railway Tavern, snug and comfortable, with a "quick draught" of home-brewed ale and bitter beer, thanks to the powers of suction of porters, guards, and admiring friends of both, who vent their admiration in "standing glasses round." Not a little of its custom does the Railway Tavern owe to that small plot of waste ground in front of it, where, even on this desolate night, you might trace the magic circle left by the "ring" of Signor Quagliasco's Mammoth Circus on its visit last autumn, and the holes for the pole and tent-pegs, and the most recent ruts on which were left by the wheels of the cart of the travelling photographer who "took" the entire town at Christmas, and, in addition to the photograph, presented each sitter with a blue card embossed with a scarlet robin bearing in its mouth the legend, "A happy new year to you." Then villas; Mr. Cobb's, the corn-chandler and coal merchant, with a speckled imitation-granite porch, white and black, as if it had been daubed with a mixture of its owner's flour and coal-dust; Mr. Lawson's, the attorney, with a big brass plate on its outer gate, and two stone pine-apples flanking the entrance; Mr. Charlton Biggs's, the hop-merchant, in all the gentility of a little chaise-house leaning against the street door, approached by a little carriage-drive so narrow that the pony had never yet walked up it properly, but had always been ignominiously "backed" into its tiny home. Then the outskirts of the town; the Independent Chapel, very square, very red-faced, and very compact, not to say sat upon;

the Literary Institute, with more green damp on its stuccoed walls than had been originally intended by its architect, and with fragmentary bills of "Mr. Lens's Starry Carpet, or the Heavens at a Glance," fluttering in the night wind from its portico. Merton House comes next, formerly the stronghold of the Merton-Mertons, the great Kentish family, now Mr. Bompas's Classical and Commercial Academy, with a full view of the white dimity bedsteads through the open window, and with "Old Bompas's Blaggards" inscribed—by the boys of the National School, with whom the grand Bompasians waged constant warfare—on the door-post. The commencement of the town, a mouldy old bay-windowed shop, known to Mr. Bompas's boys as "Mother Jennings's," and as the repository of "tuck," said tuck consisting of stale buns, hardbake, "all sorts," toffee, treacle, new rolls, sugar mutton-chops elegantly painted and gilt, sugar rum and gin bottles, whipcord, pegtops, and marbles; then Bullenger's, apparently a small ironmonger's, but in reality another lure for the money of Bompas's boys, for in a parlour behind his back shop Bullenger vended fireworks and half-crown detonating pistols, catapults, and cross-bows, and all sorts of such-like instruments dear to predatory boys. Then the ordinary lot of butchers, bakers, tailors, hosiers, grocers, chemists (Mr. Hotten, member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, also strongly reliant on Bompas's custom for cigars and hair-oil for the big boys, and bath-pipe and liquorice for the little ones), and then the police-station; the old grey church, with its square ivy-covered tower, its billowy graves and its half-obliterated sun-dial over the porch, and then the fresh green fields again.

All these particulars George Dallas noted in the morning, when, having early left the bed he had procured at the inn, he called in at the station and learned from the friendly porter, who was again engaged in mending his shoes with tin and tacks, when the next train would start for London, and where he could find a tailor's shop, walked briskly through the little town, with feelings very different to those which had possessed him on his first arrival at the Amherst station. Now, his step was free and light, he carried his head erect, and though he occasionally shivered as the cold wind came sweeping over the downs and gave him a sharp unfriendly nip as it hurried by him in its progress to the sea, he bore the insult with tolerable fortitude, and seemed to derive immediate comfort from plunging his hand into his trousers-pocket, where lay the ten-pound note he had received from his mother. It was there, stiff and crisp to his touch. He had taken it out and looked at it twice or thrice on the road, but he could not do that now in the town; he must content himself with touching it, and the crinkling sound was music in his ear; he had been so long without money, that he derived the keenest pleasure from the possession of this actual tangible sum, and felt

so little inclined to part with it, that, though he had passed, and noticed in passing, the tailor's shop to which he had been recommended by the porter, he still walked on. It was not until he had made a circuit of the old churchyard at the end of the town, where even on summer days the wind is generally at play, and where on winter nights it ramps and rages in a manner terrible to hear and feel, that George Dallas began to comprehend the necessity of at once procuring some warmer clothing, and, turning back, made straight for the tailor's shop.

A neat, clean-looking shop, with "Evans, Tailor," painted over the window, the effect being slightly spoiled by the knob of the roller blind, which formed a kind of full stop in the middle of the word "Tailor," and divided it into two unequal portions; with "Evans, Tailor," blazing from its brass door-plate; with "Evans, Tailor," inscribed with many twisted flourishes on its wire blind, where it emerged coyly from "Liveries" preceding it and took hasty refuge in "Uniforms" at its conclusion. Evans himself behind the counter, a fat, chubby, rosy little man, with clustering iron-grey hair round his temples, and a bit of round scalp wig fitting, like the lid of a teapot, into a bald place on his crown. Apparently he had been all his life tailoring to such an extent for other people as to have had no time to attend to himself, for he stood behind the counter this winter's night in his shirt-sleeves, and without his coat.

The old man bowed as George Dallas entered the shop, and asked him what they could do for him. Dallas replied that he wanted a warm thick overcoat, "if they'd got such a thing."

"Such a thing! Well, there may be such a thing, perhaps, but I'm not certain, not being an article kept in stock," replied Mr. Evans, "which is mostly tarpaulin for the railway guards and stokers, likewise canal boatmen, which is often customers. A warm thick overcoat," repeated the old man, "is a article generally made to order, though I've a sort of a recollection of a something of the kind returned on our hands in consequence of the party which was staying at the Lion having left promiscuous. Let me see!" he continued, opening two or three drawers. "I ain't so young as I was, sir, and I'm touched in the wind; and this nasty gas which we've only had this winter don't do for me, making me bust out in sudden prusperation. Ho! I thought so! Here's a warm thick overcoat, blue Whitney, lined with plaid; that's a article I can recommend; our own make; we ain't ashamed of it, you see!" and he pointed to a label stitched inside just below the collar, where the inevitable "Evans, Tailor," in gilt letters, was supplemented by the address, "Amherst."

George Dallas took the coat and slipped it on. It fitted tolerably, and was thick and warm. "What is the price?" he asked.

"We can do that for you at fifty-three and six," said the old man. "It was a three-pounder, that coat was, when made for the party

at the Lion, but we'll make a reduction now. Fifty-three and six, and our own make. You couldn't do better."

"I dare say not," said Dallas, absently. "Please to change this for me."

At the sight of the bank-note Mr. Evans's pleasant face became a little clouded. He did not relish the notion of changing notes for persons with whom he had no previous acquaintance. But after he had taken the note in his hand and held it between his eyes and the light, and flattened it out on the counter, his cheerful expression returned, and he said, "All right, sir. I'll change it and welcome! I know where you got this note, sir! Ah, you may start, but I do! You got it from our post-office, lower down the street; here's the post-office stamp on it, which they're compelled to put on every note passing through their hands. Look, 'Amherst, B. 1, Jan. 30.' Thank you, sir; six and six's, three and seven is ten; thank you, sir!" and the old man, having counted the change from a cash-box in a desk at the back of the shop, hurried round to open the door and bow his customer out.

Within half an hour George Dallas was in the train on his return to London.

OLD RED-LETTER DAYS.

EVERY one will understand what is meant here by Red-Letter Days. We have all our official red-letter days, when it is incumbent on us to be happy and joyful in demeanour, and when all the necessary preparations have been made to that end. There is the *titular* expedition, the picnic, the pleasure-party by rail, when we go out to enjoy ourselves as by recipe, and—do not. These are the regulation red-letter days, when we feast and make merry, as per order; but fail signally. We find, then, that we may call our spirits from the vasty deep, or any other quarter, but they decline to come. No; every red-letter day, if the reader will search back his memory, will be proved to be accidental. Every one of us have—or should have, unless we be *Miserimus*—a few of these glorified milestones along the rutty, dusty, ill-watered, weary high road which we are all trudging along and call Life. The most exhausted and battered tramp of us all has found these little bits of green grass, these shady places, into which he has turned from the glare and the dust, and dropped down to rest his limbs. But these places, as I have said before, were not the places set down in the guides and road-books, but merely turned up by chance. If we search back for those pleasant spots, we shall find that all these dissolving views, settling before us with trembling, quivering, and faint colours, are not cunningly and artfully devised beforehand.

Not but that we scarcely make sufficient capital of all our advantages. The days are slipping by, and there are the hundred thousand sights and shows of our earth, from the greater

and more costly, down to those which are round about us and before us, and which we have only to open our eyes to see. Leigh Hunt was the most studious epicurean, in a harmless way, that ever lived; for he took every turn and incident of his life, wet days and fine days, cold days and hot ones, and stewed each down to extract the essence out of it.

School-days are, beyond question, the true red-letter days of life. *There* you have true unalloyed enjoyment, not to be even approached in later days by the most exquisite of matured pleasures. In fact, the true secret of real enjoyment, which consists in severe regimen with alternatives, is there carried to the highest pitch. There is the stern discipline, prison-like fears and constraint, to be succeeded by unbounded liberty and luxury almost in matters of diet. This is the secret. If we could be all interdicted from our habitual comforts periodically, kept on hard fare both as to mind and body, given only a crust and water for our thoughts and appetites to digest, we should come back with an inexpressibly sweet pleasure to the common things of life, which we now accept out of sheer and mere habit and monotony.

As we look back over the rich champaign country of memory, we all of us find it dotted and studded with red-letter days. There is the visit to the country-house, long ago, which was snatched from a prosy round of business and fatiguing duty. This glistens in the distance, like a strip of water in the desert. Such are regular holidays, when we leave the dull round of monotomies and troubles in a heap at the railway station. How welcome the festival time at a great house! the variety of gay company—the state, the feasting and dancing, the fresh out-door sports, the sudden intimacies, the general tone of fun, the “charming girls,” the shooting, the riding, and the driving. What if the whole be a little theatrical, and the friendship and good humour but that of the hour? It is still excellent, and something to look back to, even during the dreary journey in the railway, where we find our cares and troubles waiting for us, neatly tied up, at the terminus.

There are smaller things—trifling festivals—to which we may look back to as red-letter days. Our first introduction to a famous story, or to a famous history, when we have sat up half the night—before the faithless eyes gave way—feasting on marvellous drawings, meeting all sorts of grotesque character, hearing them talk, laughing uproariously, crying, bewildered with their variety, until it has long gone two, and it is time to think of bed. So with music. We have opera nights to look back to, feasts of delightful harmony, first nights of new operas—nights of exquisite enjoyments. Old exploded *Der Freischütz*, ever fair and young in its delightful harmonies and melodies, was introduced to me for the first time at a provincial theatre with English voices and words, and though ALFRED CARTER was first tenor—a gentleman who sang about his ‘art, and who declaimed fiercely at the end of the piece about

being ‘appy, ‘appy evermore! and though it was MADAME POLIDORI SMITH who played the lovely Agnes, still the charming music was delightful to listen to. There was another night also in a provincial theatre, when the “little lady” made her first curtsey, and sang Consumption and Coughs in a way they had never been sung before.

I have a red-letter day or two, not many years back, which, beside their official redness, have a specially gay and parti-coloured air. Some one has suddenly said, “We are for Rome next week; suppose *you* come too?” the pleasure of which supposition held a sort of wit, from its suddenness and contrast. For this was not at the regular sight-seeing season, when expeditions fall in, as of course, when all the world gets out its scrip and shoon; but in the busy labour time, with the workshops in full swing, and the clanking and hammering of the forges busy all round,—in short, at the beginning of March, when there were greys in the clouds and cold in the air. In the surprise of this proposal lay its charm. Nothing can be pleasanter than a journey at such a season, when the weather is temperate and cool. That little wandering, at this date, falls now into a perfect series of pictures, and perhaps the pleasantest feature of all was to find the skies brightening and growing into a most delightful and genial warmth, with every mile of progress. There was Paris, never the same, and, no matter how often seen, has the effect of putting the eye to a stereoscope and of showing a gay and gaudy slide. That drive from the railway, and sudden emerging upon the Italians’ Boulevard, where there are the trees, and the open cafés, and the grand palaces, with gilt balconies, and streams of soldiers, ladies, Turks, Russians, Indians, and the whole of that wonderful procession which saunters past so picturesquely all day long. The colours are the happiest chosen in the world; and even the Indian red of the soldiers’ baggy trousers, subdued and rich, blend admirably and with far more harmony than would the staring vermillion of our military. Picture of pictures indeed! Then wandering through that day, here, there, and everywhere, past the great hotel, then newly opened, on to the Palais Royal, and from that back again to other enchantments, rubbing one’s eyes occasionally, for the din and clank of the forge is still in the ear, until evening draws on, and the night, and the scene changes to the vast halls of that grand cosmopolitan railway, the most wonderful terminus in the world, where continually set off, for all the ends of the earth, men and women of every known tribe. Then draw down the blinds, and let darkness settle down on uneasy slumber and a long night, awaking to periodic and piercing draughts when the door is opened suddenly and a lantern flashed in.

With a bright morning came Lyons, all seen from aloft from high hills, with the great town lying below, and the two noble rivers melting together, and winding like silver ribbons. In

the morning's sun the snowy viaducts and silver bridges shone out. Then came the journey down south, through the wine districts, where the porter's announcement of the very names of stations seemed to be redolent of vinous bouquet; where the women were seen in the fields on each side busy training the vines, and the air was so charged with the fragrance of association, that it seemed easy to fancy the abbé sitting opposite to be Laurence Sterne—though M. l'abbé would not have relished the comparison—and that we were making a new sentimental journey together. What names—Nuits, Orange, Beaune, Nîmes—where I knew were the old Roman ruins and amphitheatres, so charmingly described by Alexandre Dumas in his rattling travels in the south, which, next to the sentimental journal, have as much air and colour as any modern travels. Then, as the evening drew on, and the darkness fell, came Avignon, with an indistinct view of a row of towers, faint and shadowy, seen through the station door, and supposed to be the palace of the popes. There was no time to explore; but the name itself had music. There was music, too, but of another sort, in the hasty dinner (Avignon is famous for its buffet), and then we go on again. It grows dark, and we stop at this station and that, when the peasants get in and get out, and the traveller, many hundred miles from his own home, looks out at them, wondering, and *not* able to persuade himself that this is the same old story as it goes on at home, and this is but Lubin and Hodge, and a French Mr. and Mrs. Grundy going home from market.

At last, towards midnight, the lights began to grow more frequent, the train to bound forward, as if "the avenue" were at hand, and a special openness and clearness in the sea-air. Here, at last, was the great French station, all white and wide awake with the omnibuses and cabs, and then we go rolling, and reeling, and trundling down great hills into the town. Then there is the night of good and weary sleep at L'Empereur, with an early awakening from the sun and morning's light pouring into the room. I run over, throw the window wide open, and look out into the gayest of gay scenes; for this is Marseilles, and this is the morning of another red-letter day.

A sight not to be forgotten. To think that only a few days ago was gloom and winter; here was bright summer and colours, a wide broad street, crowded, glittering, gorgeous cafes, streams of Italian and Levantine sailors, gay shops, and every shop with striped blue and red awnings floating and fluttering loose over it. A hum and chatter of voices—Greek, Italian, English, French—a splendid theatre opposite, a no less splendid exchange rising just beside, and apparently cut out of blocks of cream cheese. En attendant, the stockjobbers making their bargains in the open air under the trees. Everywhere colour, light, air and exhilaration. Exhilaration from the sea; for stepping out on the balcony I see "the port," a hundred yards

down to the left, closing up that end of the street with a shield of cobalt blue, and white fluttering sails, and rigging crowded together, with merchandise landing on the snowy pier, and little ships with pink and blue awnings spread—floating about. Whatever sights are to be seen on this earth, I shall never forget the perfect gaiety and prettiness of *that* morning's view.

Later comes the bright holiday packet down at the docks, not grim and grimed and rusted like British docks, but gay and fair. The packet herself, yacht-like; and her French steward—even her captain, who is the "Marine Impériale"—seem as if lent, or at least their clothes, from the theatre left behind. It was, indeed, a yacht voyage, out through the shipping, by the headlands, and past the island Monte Christo (Alexandre again!), and on by the coast, leaving the town, and docks, and shipping glistening behind.

The company, too, under the awning on the deck, was as gay and full of spirits as a genuine yacht party. The stout French officers, the Italian family and their courier, the English. Our banquets in the saloon were genuine table d'hôte dinners. The horrible accompaniments of the sea were far, far away. After dinner came the lounge on deck, the delicious coasting by the French shore, the little towns, the freshening evening, the stars coming out, the pleasant pacing the deck, as if it were the balcony of a café, the pleasant visit to the saloon below, where there was chatter and laughter, and the final "turning in," to the clean, bright, gilded berth next the bull's-eye, past which the blue Mediterranean was rushing with a pleasant "hish," reflecting stars and moon in flashes of white and blue. There was a pleasant "see-saw" motion, but nothing packet-like in movement or savour.

The morning, a true red-letter morning. Awakened by a globe of sunlight, and with a glance at the ocean of molten cobalt that was glistening under the morning, I went up on deck. That was a sight indeed. It was six o'clock, and yet there was universal sun, sultry as at noon, and universal cobalt rippling and glittering under it, as if mixed with quivering silver. I never shall forget that picture. While on the left was gliding past the Italian coast, with every now and again a little village or town that seemed encrusted with precious stones, with diamonds and pearls, so gorgeous and glistening did they look; while here in front was approaching something like a yellow lighthouse that glistened too, and a faint chocolate-coloured mole. And here, as it drew nearer, was a network of rigging, ships, in short a little harbour—my first Italian harbour, with that delightful foreign "cut" and air which breaks out even in a harbour.

As we glided in between the yellow lighthouse and chocolate mole, it seemed all to crowd and light up like a scene in an Italian opera. Through feluccas and other quaint craft, past large vessels and foreign-looking steamers, but

all as gay and festive-looking as could be conceived; while behind them was growing up a gorgeous amphitheatre with stripes of colonnaded palaces, all gaily dashed with silver and gold. The whole seemed gradually to rise and glow as we moved on slowly. Even the vessels we passed seemed operatic and as gay as theatrical ships, and with the rich blue bed of water around them. As we wound on among them the glistening amphitheatre seemed to enlarge and grow more brilliant. There are the tall blocks of houses rising out of the water with names written across them ("Hôtel de la Croix de Malte" is one), and a red gateway down at the water's edge. Soldiers looking over the battlements, boats shooting about with scarlet rowers, and beside us our sister French packet with its snowy white paddle-boxes, setting off on its return home. All this—the harbour, the amphitheatre, the colours—made up GENOA.

Breakfast now in the airy saloon, with every window wide open and the breezes fluttering through. And a very gay, lively breakfast "according to the fork," with wine and solidities. Great spirits. Then we go up and find a crowd of boats with real operatic Italians out of Masaniello waiting in the boats—frantic, gesticulating fellows. Some, too, with boats laden with fruit—a feast of colour. This is all an old story a thousand times told—yet it was inexpressibly delightful to one who had never seen even a patch of Italian life, and in whose ears was still clanging the rude noises of Coke on Lytton, and the Common Bench Reports. In a moment we are going ashore to fairyland, for our ship was to lie here in luxuriant ease all day long and take holiday.

Italian opera again on landing at a copper-coloured gate like the entrance to a fortress. Fairyland begins with the brick-coloured stavedores in blue shirts loading and unloading, and then we plunge into a sort of cool arcade that seems half underground; where there are little booths, with women in gold ornaments, roasting and selling chesnuts, and openings at every hundred yards, which show us patches of the gaudy street. Hark! the jangling of bells; and we stand up against the wall to let a string of mules, all garnished with bosses of ruby-coloured worsted, canter by. The music of their hoofs on the earthy ground, the cracking of the whips, the cries of the driver—this was a true bit of character and of colour.

After that we emerge into lilly streets, gay, gorgeous, yellow, amber-coloured, fluttering with parti-coloured blinds; women with white veils and gold combs and ornaments; open *places*, still up a hill; every one chatting, lounging, crowded, busy—the gayest and liveliest of scenes. Then we change to a narrow street lined with great palaces, whose windows are grated like bird-cages, and which try to look gloomy but cannot, and which only look cool and shady instead. Everything is magnificent, massive, and gorgeous—too heavy for the earth. Then we come to a shady street again, where is a superb grey palace, retired from business, with a court-yard

in front; and through the arch of which we see orange-trees laden with oranges, and arcades all round, where Italians are sitting and sipping sorbets; for this palace has become a *café*; and we go in and become Italians, and sip ravishing drinks, half-cloudy ice, which thus cover the glass with a cool bloom. At our backs are decayed frescoes. Then we go wandering about, meeting fresh pictures at every turn—open squares where there is the theatre, and where every one is gathered reading newspapers, or doing 'Change work, or taking ice or coffee—where the mountebank, on his cart, is selling quack medicines. Then we dive again into shady streets, and come to a church built of black and white magpie marble, but still splendid; and enter, lifting the mat at the door, and find it dark, cool as a cave, all covered with gold and pictures; and afar off, at the altar, a dark figure teaching catechism to a flock of little Italian girls—a picture in itself. Then we find the evening drawing on, and that our time is nearly come, so we saunter down to the blue water's edge, and float over the waves to our French steamer, which is nearly ready to set off.

Of all the series of choice pictures which each of us puts by carefully in the little portfolio we call memory, none can show me the bright colours of *that* Red-Letter Day, or the unbounded delight and spirits with which everything was welcomed. Rome came later, whose gorgeous pictures the same hand tried to paint for readers of this journal, but nothing ever approached in delight that Genoa day.

READING MADE EASY.

It is a pleasant thing for most of us that we do not remember having learnt to read; that the act of swallowing the alphabet is as utterly effaced from our memories as our birthday dose of castor-oil, our vaccination, or the cutting of our first teeth. What a pity that other things—mathematics and Greek—cannot be as unconsciously taken in! Learning to read must be, for youths and adults, a particularly painful process. The difficulties attending this acquirement after childhood seem to be prodigious.

For some years past, our neighbours, the French, have paid great attention to this subject. Various curiously-named systems have been devised—called "*Statlegie*," from *statim*, immediately, and *legere*, to read, and "*Citolegie*," from *cito*, quickly—for rapidly teaching big children and adults to read; little children and infants being left the happiness of learning the genuine A B C from mother or nurse. These systems have proved effectual; partly, perhaps, in consequence of the great pains bestowed in applying them.

The main objection urged against them is, that pupils so taught to read, soon forget what they have learned. Lightly come, lightly go. But the objection is not good for much, so long as

the fact remains that the pupils *are* taught to read, which fact cannot be gainsaid. If a soldier who has learned to read in winter discontinues his readings in summer, he will only experience what is common to us all—the weakening of an acquired faculty for want of practice. Our mental, are subject to the same law as our material treasures. Things that are laid up in holes and corners, moth and rust will surely corrupt. The practical rule, therefore, to be insisted on is, that the quicker the faculty of reading is acquired, the more perseveringly must the learner exercise it. He must continually practise gymnastics with his mind as well as with his body. When the Romans spoke of a raw and ignorant soldier, they said “*Nec legit, nec natat*”—“He neither knows how to read nor to swim.”

The adaptation of these systems to the English language, however possible, is a task which can hardly be worked out on the present occasion. Meanwhile, the reader who wishes to know more of them will do well to consult the treatises themselves. There is the famous *Méthode Laffontaine*, for teaching people to read in a few hours; there is *La Citologie*, *Nouveau Maître de Lecture*, nineteenth edition, for the use of mothers of families, by Hippolite Auguste Dupont, schoolmaster and Chevalier of the Legion of Honour—a system classed the first by the university; and there is the *Méthode Militaire d'Enseignement Primaire*, by Etienne Roland, adopted for the Army in 1840 by the Minister of War.

One distinguished promoter of education, M. Auguste Grosselin (Short-hand Reviser to the Corps Legislatif, and Member of the Administrative Council of the Central Society for Supporting and Teaching the Deaf and Dumb in France), has undertaken a mission of double difficulty. He proposes to make learning to read, easy and attractive, and he employs a method which permits deaf and dumb pupils to be taught simultaneously with others who can hear and speak.

For making his teachings attractive, he gives the reason that, although instructors of childhood are entrusted with an office of extreme importance and utility, it is not uncommon to see the task despised by the very persons who ought to be proud of fulfilling it. Whence can this unhappy frame of mind arise but from weariness and disgust with the act of teaching? And whence arises the master's distaste for teaching but from the distaste for learning manifested by the pupil? Right-minded people do not willingly make themselves the persecutors of little children; and nothing is more painful than to be incessantly compelled to scold and punish, in order to overcome repugnance or resistance to the learning of a tiresome lesson. When, on the contrary, the pupil desires the lesson with impatience, and receives it with delight, the master derives equal pleasure and gratification from giving it. “To instruct by amusing,” ought therefore to be the motto of every teacher of early childhood. He must gently *attract* his scholars to the taste

for, and the habit of, work. M. Grosselin effects that object by his *Méthode Phonomimique*, or Plan of associating Vocal Sounds with Imitative Gestures. Of its successful employment there can be no doubt. Children have been taught to read in forty lessons of only one quarter of an hour each—in a total of ten hours! In ordinary schools, the process of learning to read is often dragged over several months, and is only imperfectly effected at last.

His first step, therefore, was to compose a phonomimic alphabet for the joint use of deaf-dumb and of hearing-speaking pupils. He composed it by reasoning thus:

The sounds which serve as the elements of speech may be considered as so many onomatopœas. An onomatopœa is a rhetorical figure, when a word is made to imitate the sound of a thing; as “boom!” for the firing of a cannon. “Cuckoo” is an onomatopœa common to many languages. The elements of speech, then, are sounds imitating sometimes the exclamations by which man expresses the sudden emotions of his soul, sometimes the cries of certain animals, sometimes the sounds of certain natural phenomena. Coincident with the onomatopœas of sound, there are veritable onomatopœas of gesture; and, by accompanying speech with gesture, we render our thought more expressive and striking. When a grand and beautiful spectacle draws from us a cry of admiration, do we not express the same sentiment of admiration by raising the hand to heaven and holding it backward? If, on the contrary, we experience a feeling of horror, do we not manifest it by uttering a different cry, and thrusting our hand forward, as if to repel the object which meets our view? Is not the vocal sound by which we impose silence on an indiscreet chatterer, rendered more significant by placing our finger on our lips? In order to represent a bird flying away, while we imitate with the voice the sound made by a bird's wings striking the air, do we not imitate its ascensional movement by a gesture of the hand?

A certain number of picturesque and natural ideas may be thus represented, at once by gestures and the sound of the voice. It is the reunion of these sounds and the corresponding gestures which constitutes the phonomimic alphabet, requiring, however, modification according to the language it is employed to convey. It is *not* a pantomime—not a universal language of signs.

This alphabet serves as the basis of a process which, applied to reading, transforms into a game, a study hitherto considered difficult and repulsive. Applied to the teaching of deaf-dumbs, it renders possible their instruction in company with hearing-speakers.

All that can be done here is to convey an idea of the thirty-three gestures which make up the phonomimic alphabet. A gesture accompanying every sound pronounced by the pupil is the only innovation introduced into the teaching of

reading. The innovation, consequently, is an addition to, and not an alteration in, the modes of learning to read actually in use, with which, moreover, the phonomimic plan can be combined with the greatest ease.

What most discourages a child who is learning to read, is, that letters and syllables are presented to him as abstractions—as things without any definite meaning. The proof is the delight which beams in his countenance when, able to read currently, he finds in a word the expression of some familiar idea. By attaching, therefore, an idea to every sound and every articulation of the voice; by representing the same idea by a gesture, and then by making the syllable (that is, the union of the articulating consonant with the vocalic sound) a sort of gymnastic exercise, the phonomimic system satisfies the imperious craving felt by children both for physical and intellectual exercise.

It is only after these preliminary exercises—which are, in fact, a game of play—that the children are shown the letters or the combinations of letters necessary to represent the different sounds and articulations of a language. Delighted at finding in the letters the same ideas which he had previously expressed by voice or gesture, the child retains the letters with the same facility as he retained the objects presented to his sight. For the details of M. Gosselin's eight tableaux (to be had in France for fifteen-pence, or in London for two shillings), and the exercises based upon them, the reader must consult that gentleman's Method; or, better still, should behold it in action in a mixed school of deaf-dumbs and hearing-speakers, where alone its full interest can be appreciated.

The deaf-dumb, like the hearing-speaker, possesses the two senses by means of which mankind acquires almost the sum total of its ideas; namely, sight and touch. Hearing (of which speech is the correlative function) is undoubtedly the most precious instrument for *communication*; but with respect to the *acquisition* of ideas themselves, the sense of hearing may be placed pretty nearly on a level with those of smell and taste.

There are only two ways of placing the deaf-dumb in a social position as nearly analogous as possible to that of the hearing-speaker. One is, to teach him to speak, and to train him to read speech on the lips; the other is, to induce hearing-speakers to accept—besides the oral language which addresses itself to the ear—a manual language addressing itself to the eye. In the system we are considering, the language gesticulated being the exact representation of the language spoken, the deaf-dumb who has learned to pronounce sounds and articulations, will translate gestures into words with the same facility as the hearing-speaker translates words into gestures. The simple knowledge of the phonomimic alphabet immediately puts both the one and the other in a condition to make this double translation.

Up to the present time, four methods have been employed to enable deaf-dumbs to commu-

nicate either amongst themselves or with hearers. The first and oldest of these methods—invented by the dumb themselves—is mimicry or pantomime, which consists in representing every idea by a gesture, sometimes natural, sometimes conventional. Pantomime, the deaf-dumb's language of predilection, constitutes a veritable dialect, having its own peculiar vocabulary and a syntax completely different from that of spoken languages. Consequently, deaf-dumb families are able to employ this language among themselves without taking any trouble to learn it. The second method is artificial articulation, with its correlative, the reading of speech upon the lips.

The two last methods (which, by their close connexion, in reality form only one) are writing and "dactylogie," or talking with the fingers. But as both those methods are subjected to, and dependent on, the rules of orthography, it is clear that neither writing nor dactylogie can render any service in putting deaf-dumbs in communication with illiterate persons or little children. Assuredly, deaf-dumbs ought to be taught to write at the earliest possible opportunity; but as writing is, for the hearing-speaker, only the translation of oral language, so for the deaf-dumb it ought to be only the translation of manual language.

The phonomimic system, being based on the representation of pronunciation itself, is certainly the easiest instrument of communication. The hearing-speaker who wishes to make use of it is not even obliged to be able to read. When once he knows the thirty-three gestures of the phonomimic alphabet and their value, he has only one thing to do in order to form gesticulated words: namely, to accompany every sound or articulation pronounced by his mouth, by the gesture corresponding to it.

What does a mother do when any object, action, or quality obtrudes itself on her infant's notice and excites his attention? She pronounces the word or the phrase which signifies the object, the action, or the quality. What ought the mother of a deaf-dumb child to do under the circumstances? She will accompany the sounds of her voice with the gestures which are equivalent to them. The simple knowledge of the phonomimic alphabet, therefore, enables a mother and all who are about a deaf-dumb child to be his first instructors, and to supply him with the indispensable preliminary of all education: a vocabulary.

A word about manual numeration. With one single hand it is possible to represent all numbers, however great or small they may be, by combining the advantages of roman and decimal numeration.

Four different positions of the hand represent: first, what are called, in arithmetic, the orders, that is to say, the units, the tens, and the hundreds of each class of numbers; secondly, the different classes of numbers, that is, the units, properly so called, the thousands, the millions, the billions, the trillions, and so on.

Hold vertically, with the tips of the fingers

pointing upwards, the hand represents the units of each of those classes. Held horizontally, with the palm outwards, it represents the tens of each of those classes. Horizontally, with the palm inwards, it represents the hundreds of those same classes. Held vertically, with the tips of the fingers downwards, it represents the classes themselves.

The fingers represent: first, the quantity of units, of tens, of hundreds contained in the different classes; secondly, the classes themselves.

Thus, according to the position of the hand: one finger represents one, ten, a hundred, or the class of units properly so called; two fingers represent two, twenty, two hundred, or the class of thousands; three fingers represent three, thirty, three hundred, or the class of millions; four fingers represent four, forty, four hundred, or the class of billions. The thumb alone represents five, fifty, five hundred, or the class of trillions; the thumb and one finger represent six, sixty, six hundred, or the class of quadrillions; the thumb and two fingers represent seven, seventy, seven hundred, or the class of quintillions; the thumb and four fingers represent nine, ninety, nine hundred, or the class of septillions.

For fractions, the numerator is represented in the same manner as a whole number. The denominator is also represented like a whole number, but with the forefinger of one hand placed across the fingers of the other, as a sign of division. To represent a denominator which requires two positions of the hand—for instance, ten-thousandth's, one-hundred-millionth's—the forefinger, the sign of division, will remain applied to the fingers of the other hand during its passage from the position which represents the tens or the hundreds to the position which represents the thousands or the millions. The cipher or nought—the figure whose only use in written numeration is to occupy the place of the orders or classes which are absent in a number—is represented by the little finger. The little finger, therefore, indicates the missing classes or orders of a number, which, moreover, are clearly enough denoted to be wanting by the omission of the positions of the hand which designate those classes or those orders.

The fundamental operations of arithmetic may be indicated as follows: the two hands held vertically one beside the other, denote that the numbers represented by the fingers of the two hands are to be added together. The two hands placed vertically one above the other, denote that the number represented by the fingers of the lower hand is to be subtracted from the number represented by the fingers of the upper hand. The two hands, crosswise, indicate the multiplication of the two respective numbers. The two hands placed one above the other, the upper one vertically, the lower one horizontally, indicate that the upper number is to be divided by the lower one.

In these different exercises, the fingers, whatever be the position of the hands, only indicate simple units. The results of the operation pro-

posed to the pupils ought to be announced by them by voice and gesture, or by gesture alone, if the teacher desires the exercise to be performed in silence. When the number which is the answer to the question is composed of tens and units, the right hand denotes the tens, whilst the left hand denotes the units. These exercises allow deaf-dumbs and hearing-speakers to be simultaneously taught to reckon.

With all this, moral education is combined, by making use of the innate emulation which urges us day by day to behave better towards those who form part of the family circle, small or great, to which we belong. The directress of an infant school in Paris has tried the experiment with success. She selects from amongst her pupils those who have most distinguished themselves during the past month, by their good conduct, their docility, their kindness to their schoolfellows, and their efforts to prevent them from doing wrong. Of these picked pupils, under the title of Elder Brothers, she makes the chiefs of little groups or bands, each of which, as far as possible, is composed of children belonging to the same neighbourhood. She makes all the members of the same group or family *solidaire*; that is, the good or bad marks given to each individual are set down to the account of the whole. At the end of every month, a Tablet of Honour is drawn up, on which the families are inscribed according to their order of merit. Beneath the name of each family are inscribed the names of the children composing it, with their contingent of good or bad marks.

To remind the children of the respect and gratitude which they owe to persons devoted to their education and welfare, the directress names her families after the names of their friends and benefactors: Saint Vincent de Paul, the founder of Foundling Hospitals; Oberlin, Madame Mallet, and other founders of the first Infant Schools; Frœbel, the founder of Children's Gardens; Péreire, the first teacher of Deaf-Dumbs in France; and so on.

CAIROLA.

STANZAS BY A VENETIAN EXILE TO A PICTURE OF HIS BIRTHPLACE, SENT HIM IN APRIL, 1866.

I.

I SEE the Brenta and its level shore,
The budding elms, the grey old sycamore;
The house, with all its windows opened wide,
Looks down with laughing eyes upon the tide,
The slow calm tide, which lapses smooth along,
And murmurs soft its low perpetual song
To Cairolà.

II.

O song, that came and came to heart and brain,
Through all those exiled years of dreary pain;
How oft amid the battle's charge I heard
Its echoes as an old familiar word,
And through the clarion's voice its whisper broke,
And 'mid the dying and the dead it spoke
Of Cairolà!

III.

How oft, when in a sordid cell confined,
My active thoughts, my free, my chainless mind
Were borne far, far, to these old rooms where we
Brothers and sisters, by our mother's knee,
Roused the scared neighbours with our gleeful joys,
And greybeards wondered at the bold brave boys
Of Cairolà.

IV.

I thought of these wide rooms, the ceilings high,
These lines of windows letting in the sky;
In stripes of orient opal set in blue
The night with all her marvels glittered through;
The morning's rose, the evening's purple pall
Shone through those frames like pictures on a wall
Of Cairolà.

V.

Here, where the everlasting hills lift up
This fairest Florence in a jewelled cup
Of em'rald, streaked with pearl and amethyst,
With agate curves by ruby sunsets kiss'd;
Where Nature wears her brightest, rosiest face,
My heart recalls with love thy homelier grace,
My Cairolà.

VI.

I watch old Giotto's bell-tower spring in air,
And mark how suns and moons have burnished fair
The marble molten through with light and flame,
And then I think of one in form the same,
But loftier, barer, slighter, which doth rise
Upholding on its spire the soft blue skies
Of Cairolà.

VII.

How often when a child I wistful gazed,
And deemed it pierced the firmament upraised,
That earth might thus sustain the floor of heaven!
But now, long years, a sadder faith has given;
God's sky no longer seems so near as then—
I had not learned my bitter doubts of men
At Cairolà.

VIII.

'Twas there, beneath the soft Venetian skies,
My boyish life I vowed to sacrifice,
As I had read in Plutarch good men gave
Nobly their lives, their country's life to save.
And thus I earned my exile; life has past
In one long struggle since I saw thee last,
My Cairolà.

IX.

How long since then! How many hopes cut down,
How many leaves have dropped from youth's bright
crown,
My end yet unattained! I linger here,
While all alone, my mother sitteth there,
And sighs as she looks round the empty room,
Ben mio! thou art long in coming home
To Cairolà.

X.

But no! Amid the stormy northern skies
Sudden I see the bow of Hope arise;
There is a stir of nations met to free
That fairest city thrond by the sea:
They break our yoke, they loose us from our chain,
I shall not die until I see again
My Cairolà.

XI.

Fair as that bride of cities which St. John
In vision saw, our Italy hath won;

The crystal pavements and the house of gold,
The priceless pearl so often bought and sold.
Venice is free! for me my task is done,
My mother! welcome home thy dying son
To Cairolà.

JOKES.

THE printing of jest-books began here three hundred and odd years ago, and is going on still. Yet, if the whole national stock of original wit were to be gathered in and put into a book all by itself, such a modest-looking pamphlet would come of it as would be wonderful to most beholders.

One Hierocles, in the early Christian days, spent much of his time in researches into this highly momentous subject; being the first author upon it. He left behind him, as the harvest of his labours, TWENTY-ONE JOKES, which we may securely believe were all that to his knowledge existed up and down the world, after as many as five hundred years of its Christian life were spent, in addition, as many people are aware, of a previous four thousand. Twenty-one jokes in four thousand five hundred years! Which is as much as to say that the old world made a joke once in about two hundred and fifty years, and then took breath.

What a stale, worn, threadbare thing that first joke must have been when the second joke was made! The stock of fun was of course comparatively rich then; there was a glimpse of fertility. What an extraordinary run there must have been upon the little stranger!

So we see that for forty-five centuries the world was in the habit of preparing its jokes with a stupendous degree of deliberation and forethought; and the inhabitants of the universe (who lived, however, snugly, in a tiny corner of it) maintained themselves respectably and comfortably during that period on twenty-one facetiæ. But a marvellous revolution was impending. The world was meditating (speaking jocularly) a gigantic and astounding spring. From twenty-one jokes, the Hieroclean legacy, to twenty-one millions was like one step accomplished in a moment; or, in ordinary language, in about thirteen hundred years. Everything is comparative. Those first forty-five centuries joked so slowly, that we get somehow into a way of looking at them as if they had been mere chronological atoms. Adding thirteen new centuries to the old forty-five, brings us very nearly down to the age in which we live; for argument's sake, say quite to it. We stand at twenty-one million jokes. Are we content? May twenty-one million jokes be regarded as high-water mark? The greatest nation in the world ought to rest and be thankful with such an enormous fortune.

These jokes have landed in England from all parts of the world, and have been examined on disembarkation by competent scholars. They have been taught our language, and have had their clothes changed, so that no one should

have the slightest suspicion of their being born out of the country.

There is such a thing, we take it, as a nation being too greedy; wanting more jokes—not satisfied even with twenty-one millions, and saying: "Take our twenty-one million jokes, if you please. We are a little sick of them; and give us a new joke or two." It would not regard any honours as too high for the author of a new joke, and people will do well to consider the proper steps to be taken if the man should appear, as, one fine day, he may. We anticipate that he will be received with acclamations as one of the great minds of the particular generation it may please him to honour. The year in which he manifests himself will enjoy a celebrity far beyond that of any comet. How warily he would have to reconnoitre his ground! What cruelly hard work he would have of it, eye-deep in jokes for years, to ascertain beyond the possibility of a doubt that there was no little mistake to the extent of a mare's-nest! Probably his claim would be referred to an international congress of aged wits, representing every joke-producing country under the sun.

It would be of service to a gentleman desirous of becoming the hero of this proud and interesting situation to know exactly what a joke is. Joke, Latinè *jocus*, is a piece of pleasantry, a sally, a jest: which, to be perfect in all its parts, shall have a point, Latinè *punctus*, as a mouse has a tail, or a bee a sting. It happens that some mice have no tails, some bees no stings, and it happens that some jokes have no points. If the statistics of the twenty-one million extant jokes could be accurately tabulated, it has been roughly estimated that a small percentage would have to be discounted for jokes in this predicament. About one emerald in five hundred bears the test of the microscope; about one joke in fifty thousand stands the crucial test.

There are subtle likenesses in things apparently unlike. As an expert in precious stones says to a man, handing him back in perfectly cold blood his beautiful diamond, "That is the best paste I ever saw," so an assayer of modern facetiæ returns your joke, with "Clever, but in Lucian;" or, "Hierocles was before you!" or, "Very well put; but how capitally Erasmus brings that in, in such and such a place." He will get you into a corner somewhere. He has the whole matter at his fingers' ends. He knows every joke that was ever made, who made it, why he made it, and how many have made it since.

The fathers of typography were probably the worst enemies that the disciples of the joking craft ever had to encounter. The invention of printing was positively a very gross inconvenience. Anybody who did not happen to have been born, forsooth, in the fifth century, and who made a joke, was henceforward to be branded as a borrower, because Lucian had got it in his *Hetaire*, or Athenæus in his *Deipnosophiste*. As if it were likely that every one could

be born at once, and start even! MSS. have a fortunate tendency to turn to mould, but with printed books it is different; they keep on multiplying out of all reason, and thrust themselves before people's eyes in a way that leaves no chance for men coming (by no fault of their own) after Erasmus, and the rest of them. Printing was precisely the kind of thing which, when it had once started, there was no keeping within decent limits. We can bring to mind but one consolation. Some day this very press may take in hand those venerable Irish manuscripts (if they are happily preserved), the origin of which is lost in antiquity, and of which it is alleged by (Irish) scholars that Hierocles had the use. The history of the matter seems to be, that those unprinted treasures, compiled in what was at that time the only spoken language, have been sealed up for centuries somewhere; but their publication will establish the fact, doubtless, that they are the long-lost originals, from which the Chinese and other more modern nations have been borrowing without the least acknowledgment. The circumstantial testimony in favour of this supposition is regarded by competent (Irish) judges as remarkably strong. They say, that out of the twenty-one million jokes in circulation at present, no fewer than nineteen million five hundred thousand are clearly of Irish parentage. These inedited archives, they say, only await an editor. When such a person is found, there is no question that he will feel himself under deep obligations to us for a few remarks which we think we can place at his service, in support of his general argument.

What can be more evidently Irish than this? The book from which it comes was printed as lately as 1530. The printer carelessly dropped a word, which we have supplied between brackets: "A certayne [Irish] curate, preachynge on a tyme to his paryssshens, sayde that our Lorde with fyue loves fedde v hundred persones. The clerke, herynge hym fayle, sayde softly in his eare: Sir, ye erre; the gospell is v thousande. Holde thy peace, foole, said the curate; they wyl scantely beleue that they were fyue hundred."

There can be little question that the next article comes from the same source. It occurs in the same modern work: "There was a man that had a dulle lumpisshe fellow to his seruant, wherfore he vsed commonly to call him the kinge of fooles. The fellow [who was an Yrsheman by birth] at laste waxed angry in his minde to be alway so called, and sayde to his mayster: I wolde that I were the kinge of foles; for then no man could compare with me in largenes of kingdome, and also you shulde be my subiect. By this we may perceiue that to moch of one thing is not good: many one calleth an other fole, that is more fole him selfe." A volume might be filled with these examples.

We find, not very far back (comparatively speaking), in fact, in Henry the Eighth's time, a physician of the name of Borde putting forth what, with excessive effrontery, he calls Gothamite Tales. But their true extraction be-

trays itself in an instant. They are only the tales of Irish bulls served up by a clever medical gentleman to suit his own purposes—which they did; for his name being Andrew, people called him Merry Andrew then, and so it has been ever since.

These Gothamite Tales, though fragmentary, and most dishonourable plagiarisms from the Celtic, were not unamusing, as for instance:

"There was a man of Gotham did ride to the market with two bushells of wheate, and because his horse should not beare heavy, he caried his corne vpon his owne necke, and did ride vpon his horse, because his horse should not cary so heavy a burthen. Judge you, which was the wisest, his horse or himselfe!"

Little England would shrink from competition with her great Emerald sister in exuberant riches of fun; yet she has one small magazine of home-grown wit. This magazine of wit is of modest proportions, and does not run into millions; it is an even hundred, and no more; but most of the articles are of pure English manufacture, and this small but independent country is not to be bullied out of the proprietorship by any forthcoming editors and publishers of Celtic MSS. whomsoever. They are Britons born and bred, these HUNDRED MERRY TALES, and we have very little to thank Hierocles or any other foreigner for, in them, from beginning to end. They and ourselves being of the same blood, and, so to say, countrymen, we must confess, indeed, frankly, to the weakness of thinking them a peg or two above Hierocles aforesaid, rather beyond Lucian, about four times too good for Athenæus and his friends—in short, not to err too much on the side of partiality, *nearly* the best things of the kind that have fallen under our limited observation.

These English tales have, for the most part, strong and decided English characteristics, which show them to be no imported matter, no foreign goods, but of strictly insular growth. It was at one time our impression that the Hundred Mery Talys might have been the invention of the same Doctor Andrew Borde, of Pevensey, for whom is claimed the authorship of the old Gothamite drolleries, Scoggin's Jests, and, possibly, the Merie Tales of Skelton, Poet Lauriat: which last, according to the writer, are "very pleasant for the recreacion of the minde." But, on re-perusal, the Hundred Mery Talys strike us as being some degrees too clever for Doctor Andrew's pen; reminding us of him only in their occasional coarseness. They were, evidently, the work of some one not dependent on their sale, or he would have informed us, as the compiler of Mery Tales and Quicke Answers, circa 1530, took care to do, that they were "very mery, and pleasant to rede," or were "full of sport and delightful pastime," or some such bookseller's garnish. We feel confident that this folio of twenty-four leaves proceeded from some superior hand, indifferent to the ordinary energetic expedients used for tickling coy palates.

The Merie Tales of Skelton have never been

regarded by competent critics as of autobiographical authority; but that circumstance does not interfere with their value as English produce, which they most probably are. They were the fruit of some pleasant gentleman's opulent fancy; with which fruit he was forbearing enough, on commercial grounds, to identify a name more popular, perhaps, than his own. There are only fifteen of these stories, the majority of which are by no manner of means exhilarating, but, on the contrary, either stupid merely, or stupid and indelicate too. In fact, they are scarcely admissible within the same category as the book we have lately dismissed with praise. That is a collection of Jests quasi Joci—to translate literally, Jokes; but the Tales of Skelton are, more strictly, Jests quasi Gesta, in the same sense in which we say Gesta Romanorum.

There are three other compilations to which a similar remark is applicable, namely, Scoggin's Jests, Peele's Jests, and Tarlton's Jests—the last in a less measure than the other two, but still it is of a very germane character. They resemble in structure and treatment the Adventures of Howleglas, and even the History of Friar Rush, in a far greater degree than they resemble the Hundred Mery Talys or the Tales of the Gothamites. They come under the head of facetious biography, or may be allowed almost a place among the *Ana*; for there is no denying the likelihood that to some extent the material may have been derived from actual incidents in the lives of the men. These small books are indeed the early English *ANA*, and some knowledge of them may be serviceable to those students who are anxious to acquaint themselves with the true character of the later English *ana*, such as the *Sheridaniana*, the *Sydney Smithiana*, and a multitude more.

The Merry Jests and Witty Shifts of Scoggin scarcely exhibit an item suitable for repetition. Many of the stories were as old in his time, as the book itself is in ours. We meet there with many ancient acquaintances, as How Jack made of Two Eggs Three; and there is one morsel of facetiousness which is still being swallowed almost nightly by a cheaply diverted public, and which seems to possess the gift of remaining perennially green and fresh. It will continue, we predict, to amuse distant generations. We are alluding to the account here found, How the Scholler said that Tom Miller, of Oseney, was Jacob's Father. What would the biographer of Scoggin have said if he could have foreseen that this imported merriment would have lived on in its native air ever so long, and, after centuries, have migrated to the pleasant land of Ethiopia, from which it has now returned to delight these shores in the company of Mr. Christy and his company?

Not looking for the moment at the great main question, of which enough has been heard already, as to the *Alma Mater* of all jokes whatsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever, it is to be said of the jokes which ran in England in the sixteenth century that they were doing exactly the same thing in the seventeenth.

and were not yet run down. People's ears wearied, though, of A. C. Mery Talys, Merie Tales of Skelton, and so forth, and caterers for novelties found it imperative to "change the bill." So exeunt C. Mery Talys, Merie Tales and Quicke Answeres, very mery and pleasant to be read, Merie Tales of Skelton, and the rest of the old company, and enter, with "new and startling effects," Pasquil and Mother Bunch, Jack of Dover, Dobson, Hobson, Democritus Secundus, Taylor (Water-poet to King Charles), and Hugh Peters: each with his wallet brimming over with "screamers." Most of this comic throng were men of buckram—puppets in the showman's hands. But our ever-renewed literary waterman must be excepted. He moved the strings himself; his Wit and Mirth, as he calls it, was made in the main out of honest materials, and was a good sixpennyworth. Some of its flowers were culled from other gardens, no doubt. Take this:

"A proper gentlewoman went to speak with a rich mizer that had more gowt than good manners. After taking leave, hee requested her to taste a cup of Canara. Shee (contrary to his expectation) tooke him at his word, and thanked him. He commanded Jeffrey Starveling, his man, to wash a glasse and fill it to the gentlewoman. Honest Jeffrey fill'd a great glasse about the bigness of two taylors thimbles, and gave it to his master, who kist it to save cost, and gave it to the gentlewoman, saying that it was good Canara of six yeeres old at the least; to whom shee answered (seeing the quantitie so small), 'Sir, as you requested me, I have tasted your wine; but I wonder that it should be so little, being of such a great age.'"

Poor Taylor did not know how to tell a story as well as Lucian, but the drawback is, that Lucian relates this of a gentleman who was very far from being "proper." On the whole, however, the water-poet sins by no means so grievously as other men of his century, who were worse thieves than he was, and more bungling. As it will wound nobody's feelings, we do not mind asserting our belief that the gentlemen who availed themselves of the freedom of the press to bring on to the stage Pasquil (with Mrs. Bunch), Hobson, Dobson, and the rest, in old motley furnished up to look like new, were persons sincerely to be compassionated. There is a greater variety, too, in Taylor's Wit and Mirth (first printed in the year 1629), than in many of its fellows. The collection contains examples of the joke in its succiner and more epigrammatic forms—what used to be termed Clinches and Conceits—approaching, in fact, more nearly to the modern joke, as it is usually understood.

But the book best answering to this description is *Conceits, Clinches, Flashes, and Whimsies*, 1639, the reputed handiwork of Robert Chamberlain, a Devonshire man, and his friends. He was in the habit of noting down, like a smaller Athenæus, what was said at table over the wine, and his notes in time made a volume which somebody thought worth printing.

We are without information as to the degree of Chamberlain's personal responsibility, and seeing that he was a writer of some average poetry, and of a drama, we may venture to assume that all the good things are his, and all the bad things his friends'. He addressed his publication to the reader, quaintly enough, as "the producements of some vaporeing houres;" with a wish that the reader might be as merry in the reading as he and some *other* of his friends had been in speaking of them.

If the reader will take our word for it, Mr. Chamberlain's table-talk is very much in this style—we say Mr. Chamberlain's, because we pick the best we can find:

"One put a jest upon his friend. 'Oh,' said his friend, 'that I could but see your braines! I would even hug them for this jest.'"

"One wondered much what great scholler this same Finis was, because his name was almost to every booke." We apprehend that Mr. Chamberlain has the Spectator on the hip here.

Good wit must be good in more than one sense now, to be fit for circulation. Our earliest book of facetiæ, the Hundred Mery Talys, has less to answer for on this score than its successors; but when we have passed the middle of the seventeenth century and reach the Restoration, this class of works is most foully tainted with the leaven of uncleanness, and it may be accepted as a pretty safe rule that the most unrepresentable jokes are also the most rapid. It was Roscommon, not Pope, who said, that "want of decency was want of sense."

THE BATTLE OF REICHENBERG.

Nor much more than a hundred years ago, Prussia and Austria were engaged in a deadly war, as they were but recently. The causes of that war were very similar to those of the struggle which has cast such a stain of blood over the records of this summer; and some of the minor episodes exhibit curious coincidences. On the one hand, we find Prussia, strong in its compactness and nationality, pursuing a course of ambition and aggrandisement; on the other hand, we see Austria, jealous of and alarmed at the expanding power of her rival, vainly opposing to her advance the mere material strength of a great military organisation which had not the still mightier force of an united people at its back. The Third Silesian or Seven Years' War, commencing in 1756 and ending in 1763, was the inevitable result of a state of things which had been developing itself ever since Prussia became a kingdom and a Power of magnitude and importance, at the commencement of the century. Frederick the Great had himself already engaged in two successful wars with Austria, and had wrested Silesia from the House of Hapsburg. Bad blood existed between the two leading German Powers, and the peace from 1746 to 1756 was little better than an armed truce. Austria, chafing under her defeats, watched for any opportunity which

might present itself for recovering her lost territory and retrieving her damaged honour; Prussia also prepared herself for emergencies, augmented her resources, and disciplined her armies. The old empire and the new kingdom thus stood jealously fronting each other for a considerable time, until Prussia, with her greater energy, took the initiative, as she did a few weeks ago. Frederick the Great, though he had been actively getting ready for war himself, chose to fasten a quarrel on Austria on the score of *her* armaments. He demanded explanations; and, getting none that he considered satisfactory, bore down at once on Saxony (which was in alliance with the empire), and struck blow upon blow, much as his successor has just done under the guidance of Bismarck. This was in 1756, and in the following year he advanced from Saxony into Bohemia, which then, as now, was the scene of desperate fighting. There was much talk then of Federal Execution against Prussia, as there was in May and June of this year; but the Federal armies of 1757, like those of 1866, very speedily evaporated into space. The same energy which we have so recently seen with something of admiration and more of astonishment, was exhibited, a hundred and odd years ago, by Frederick and his generals; and Austria, though she subsequently recovered herself, was for a while paralysed by the audacity of her enemy's proceedings. The battle to which in this paper we desire to call the reader's attention, was the first fought on entering Bohemia, though it was not the last nor the most important. Towards the end of April, the Prussians poured into that part of the Austrian dominions in three columns: one under the command of Frederick himself, another under that of the Prince of Brunswick-Bevern, and the third headed by Marshal Schwerin. It was the second of these columns which first crossed swords with the Imperial troops; and the affair took place near the little town of Reichenberg, on the 21st of April, 1757.

Bohemia is completely girdled by a chain of mountains, often very wild and desolate, and in many parts covered with thick forests. The country would seem to be well protected against invasion, and in the late struggle it was made a charge against Field-Marshal Benedek that he did not defend the passes of the hilly barrier, instead of waiting for his enemy in the comparatively open ground. The Austrians committed exactly the same mistake in 1757. They seem to have disbelieved in the advance of Frederick. Accordingly, his three divisions were speedily across the frontier in three separate places, and Bohemia was in his possession. The column commanded by the Prince of Brunswick-Bevern, consisting of eighteen thousand foot and five thousand horse, started on the 20th of April from near Zittau, a little place in Saxony on the borders of Bohemia, and on the evening of that day came upon the Austrians posted in a woody hollow not far from Reichenberg. The town so named is prettily situated among hills and trees on the banks of the river

Neisse, at the foot of the Riesengebirge, as that part of the Bohemian mountain-chain is called which lies to the north-east of the kingdom. No great distance to the south-east of Reichenberg lie Josephstadt, Königsgratz, and Sadowa—henceforward to be memorable in history as the scenes of that sanguinary battle of July 3rd, 1866, the echoes of which are yet sounding in our ears. At the present day, Reichenberg is a flourishing town, with a population of about fifteen thousand, with four great manufactories of woollen cloth, and with divers other factories, altogether producing goods to the annual value of half a million sterling. The town is the chief seat of all the woollen, linen, and cotton manufactures of that part of Bohemia, and even in the last century was a place of importance. Twenty thousand pieces of cloth are said to have been made there in one year, in days before steam-power was known; so that when the opposing armies drew up in order of battle near the mills and warehouses of these peaceful burghers, they had some things of value to tremble for, over and above their lives, and those of their women and children. The battle, however, took place on the other side of the Neisse, and therefore did not touch the town. The country all round is truly pastoral and picturesque. The spurs of the Riesengebirge (the Giant Mountains) here dwindle down into undulating hills and valleys—soft waves and folds of turf ground, dotted with single trees, with clumps of wood, and here and there with little groves, darkening to shadowy green the lighter verdure of the fields. Such is the country as we see it represented in an old print of the battle published at the time. A pleasant rural country, not unlike the wilder parts of England; with leafy lanes climbing the hill-sides, and a bright placid river winding through the landscape—a bridge in the far distance. Near at hand are the scattered houses of the suburbs of Reichenberg, and a corner of the walled town itself, with sloping roofs, watch-towers, and pinnaled church. This nameless artist of a century ago has contrived to make quite a charming picture out of his battle-piece; one might look at it apart from its historical interest, and forget the smoke of mortal conflict in the comfortable serenity of nature. Strange to say, the artist has given all the firing to the Prussians.

The Austrian general, Count Königseck, having determined to offer the invader battle, posted himself, at the head of twenty thousand men, in a position which, according to military critics, was one of the best an army could occupy. At his back, he had a line of woody hills; to his right, the river Neisse; to his left, a hollow which could be readily defended. In this hollow he stationed the greater part of his army, planted batteries, and felled trees. At half-past six on the morning of the 21st of April, the Prince of Brunswick-Bevern crossed a marshy brook on which he had encamped the previous night, assaulted the left wing of Königseck, which, as we have seen, was strongly posted in a hollow with artificial defences, and

soon reduced the Austrians to extremities. The Prussian dragoons and grenadiers cleared the entrenchments and wood, and entirely routed the Austrian cavalry. At the same time, the redoubts covering Reichenberg, on the left flank of the Prussians, were captured by General Lestewitz, and, after a brief but furious hand-to-hand combat, the Austrians were driven back. Königseck, however, would not readily confess himself beaten, but made two attempts to rally, both of which ended in discomfiture. Finally, he was obliged to make a precipitous retreat, leaving on the field about a thousand dead and wounded, and in the enemy's hands some five hundred prisoners, together with guns and standards. At the close of the action (which terminated at eleven A.M.), the Prussians had seven officers and one hundred men killed, fourteen officers and a hundred and fifty men wounded. The far greater loss of the Austrians is extraordinary, considering that their infantry fought behind entrenchments, all of which the Prussians had to carry. There was no negligence in those days to account for the discrepancy, and one can only explain it on the supposition that the greater impetus of the Prussians carried them unscathed through dangers before which the more stolid Austrians fell. Königseck, moreover, seems to have been disheartened by the non-arrival of a detachment under General Macguire, an Irish subordinate of his. On the other hand, the Prussian commander was obliged to detach eight thousand of his army to watch Macguire, and keep him off; which they did so effectually that the Irishman has been made the subject of much satirical comment, reflecting on his ability, or his courage, or both. Whatever the cause, however, the Austrians were as completely beaten as they were again and again in the late war, and the Prince of Bevern was enabled to effect a junction with the third column of the invading army under Marshal Schwerin, who rapidly made himself master of the circle of Buntzlau, and joined the forces under Frederick. The battle of Reichenberg, though not a great fight in itself, was thus instrumental in preparing the way for Frederick's brilliant triumph at Prague, on the 6th of May.

Comparing the battle of Reichenberg with the recent battles fought on nearly the same ground and between the same Powers, we find some points of similarity which are worth noting. The Prussians of to-day have exhibited the same vigorous initiative as that by which their forefathers achieved so many successes under the leadership of the Great Frederick and his lieutenants. The Austrians of to-day are as were the Austrians of 1757—courageous, devoted, not deficient in good generalship according to the set rules of war, yet constantly liable to be scattered by the superior dash and animation of their Northern foes. In the eighteenth century, as in the nineteenth, the Austrian cavalry was among the best in the world; but it appears to have done nothing of importance at Reichenberg, while at Sadowa it was hardly employed at all, though ready to hand. Dr.

Russell, in his picturesque and vivid account of the latter engagement, furnished by him to the Times newspaper as its Special Correspondent, says that even at the last the day would probably have been saved to the Austrians had they brought their cavalry into action; but, as we have seen, the cavalry of 1757 was rolled up and dissipated by the fury of the Prussian charge, and so might that of 1866 have been. It should be observed that the ground on which both battles were fought (to compare great things with small) was very similar in character. The chief features of the country round Sadowa are, according to Dr. Russell, "undulating plains fretted with wooded knolls (generally sites of villages), vast corn-fields studded with substantial farm-houses and hamlets, and watered by inconsiderable rivulets, by the side of which now and then rises a tall factory or mill chimney. It is not so much wooded in the immediate proximity of the fortified city as it is to the west; but there are trees around every village and every farm-house, and the roadside, and even paths across the corn-fields, are lined with them." At Sadowa, as at Reichenberg, the Austrians cut down trees to defend their position; but they made no other entrenchments—an omission which Dr. Russell is inclined to blame.

Of dissimilarities, over and above the different magnitude of the battles, there are of course many. The modern development of artillery, and the greater range and power of the needle-gun, have revolutionised the art of war; and we now probably kill ten men where formerly we killed but one—sad triumph of a civilisation which has not yet learnt how to supplant organised murder by reasonable discussion. One difference, however, between the Seven Years' War and that of the present summer, may or may not in the end prove to the greater credit of our era. The former struggle left the European system at its close exactly what it had found it at the commencement; the modern war may lead to changes of which it is impossible as yet to foretell the limits, or estimate the worth.

SCHOOL-DAYS AT SAXONHURST.

I. SAXONHURST.

My last memories of school were very pleasant. It is no wonder that I took away with me, after some six years' residence there, a soft and delightful picture.

Saxonhurst was no common pedagoguish, neat, birching, parlour-boarded place. How it was redeemed from that vulgar association will be seen in a moment. Besides, we were more a college than a school. It was more a patrimony—an estate on which there was a large village, with tenants who owed allegiance to the lords of the soil. One of the great wings of our school was a fine Gothic church, which was a kind of parish church, to which our tenants came in large numbers; and to which, on certain festivals, notably what were their guild days, they

marched up in procession with banners flying and the band, in which the greater drum covered many harmonious imperfections with a kindly din. So bright, too, in brass buttons and blue coats, and other finery, that they looked like bridegrooms and brides come up to be married. About these rustics there was a very primitive air, that reminded us of French peasants. Our house had a centre tower with two open Italian cupolas capped with eagles, with two wings, and a square tower at each wing, regulation mullioned windows, and the whole of dark iron-grey stone. It was joined by corridors to its church on one side, and to another Elizabethan building on the other: so the whole effect was imposing enough. Then there was a high white avenue, not indeed lined with trees, but flanked by two Dutch ponds, a quarter of a mile long each, and which ran up almost to the house, or castle as we might call it.

Through the centre tower was the archway and entrance, with a bell beside it, which clanged furiously as the visitor arrived. Inside was a square court with many-sided little towers, and more mullioned windows, and a noble flight of stairs leading up to the door of the banquetting-hall: which should have been, and I am delighted to say was, a noble chamber paved with white marble, panelled with oak, and where two hundred of us dined every day with luxurious freedom for our elbows. The rest was all in keeping; long oak galleries, deep windows, old pictures, and what not. Behind, as quaint a garden as the author of *Rookwood* could lay out; yew hedges six feet high, quaint stone pagodas terminating stiff walks, a round Dutch pond with a leaden statue, abowling-green in the centre, and, above all, a "dark walk" of decrepit yews, where, at broad noon, one might grope helplessly. The whole had belonged to an ancient family of Charles the Second's date, who had fallen on evil pecuniary days.

It lay in a rough blustering county, and in a rude part, among fells, where there were very raw and severe winters, and fine oppressive summers; and we enjoyed both to extravagance. In the winter, when the frost came, and the Dutch ponds had their ice a good two inches thick, the cry was "All on!" and there was a sight to see, especially when the skating lasted for six weeks, as it sometimes did. Fancy "all on" to the number of two hundred or so, glowing cheeks, tingling ears, skimming legs, flying legs, "express trains" twenty carriages in length, whose coming was announced by a sawing and grinding on the ice, and out of whose road it was well to keep, to say nothing of the scattered vehicles, who were in everybody's way, and who tottered along, and picked their steps. But these latter were rare exceptions. For we had the recklessness of boys, and cared little for falls, even for a smashing crashing fall, when you seemed to hear the sound of your own hip-bone breaking. There was a game infinitely delightful, and the charms of which seemed exquisite, to which I now look back with a wondering longing: we enjoyed it so much. It was called "Tag," or sounded

like Tag. I suppose connected with the Latin *tactus* or *tango*, the sport of which lay in turning a fellow-boy into a universal huntsman, who gave chase to the whole world. That is to say, he could select any being he pleased, but must hunt him down, until he was "crossed" by some one else. The fun all rested in this "crossing" just as the huntsman had his arm stretched out to touch, having all but run down his prey, and being absorbed in the delicate regulating of his headlong speed, putting on the brake by driving his heels into the ice—at this critical instant, the deftest skater of our school swooped down like a locomotive, with contracted shoulders and stooped figure, and cut in between both, crossing without a graze. He had only a foot to turn in (which he did on one leg), and was away like a bird. The huntsman, staggered, half upset, was only intent on keeping his legs straight. It never palled, that delightful game. It brought wild motion, circulating blood, and wilder spirits, and there was no prettier picture of a winter evening, during "the Christmas," when the lights were twinkling in the mullioned windows, or softened behind scarlet curtains, and the air grey and fresh and inspiring, than to see the snowy white pond, like the top of a bride-cake, alive with dark frantic figures, soaring and swooping hither and thither, while the farmer going home to the village would hear the jocund cries and cheerful laughter.

II. ITS GAMES.

But the grander pastime during the winter months was FOOTBALL, played morning, noon, and evening. By it, the whole house stood or fell. Not played, either, on the effeminate principles of grass, which might do well enough for "feather-bed boys." No, our system was a vast stony hard level ground behind the college, which offered a firm satisfactory basis for a strong and long kick. No mean picking up and running away with the ball tolerated, but a fair fought stand-up battle. There were always matches going on, but there was a season—towards Shrovetide—when the national festivals of the game set in. These were known popularly as the Grand Matches, and were the glorious days to which all the rude strong-armed strong-legged muscular beings of the place looked forward with a positively painful longing. The "sides" were picked and chosen weeks beforehand. They were written out in two columns (of course during school-hours) by the most elegant draughtsman of the house. A player of artistic feeling designed an arabesque border of framework, in which football was attempted to be carried out allegorically, but inefficiently, in a good deal of strong blue and red. Subscriptions were invited for a gorgeous frame for holding the allegory, which, when sent home and shown at a private view, excited the deepest admiration.

The Grand Matches went on for three whole days. They were desperate conflicts. The masters—strong athletic men—caught the pre-

vailing fury and fought on different sides. On the morning of the encounter every one was arrayed in the worst and most ancient clothes the house could furnish, so as to feel no restraint from the fear of falls, or mud, or wet. By ten o'clock the two armies were drawn up in two lines, while in the centre, at about fifty feet from each line—measured with jealous nicety—was the football, lying by itself. Bob Davis, the leader of the French—for national antipathy was always encouraged—and Jacky Smith, the English captain—swift runners and men whose giant strength of leg and daring was looked up to with fond admiration—stood buttoned up tight, each with a leg out and breathing hard, waiting for the signal. It was felt that the shock between the two would be tremendous, for there was a feeling of personal rivalry besides. A rusty old cannon, fired with great caution in the garden, was the signal, and the two lines set off at desperate speed, and with wildness met in the middle like knights at a tournament. Bob Davis got the first kick, and I fear there was on that day laid the foundation of an enmity between these two heroes.

These were desperate battles. They went on to one or two o'clock. It was wonderful to see our coarse strong fellows, who were desperately deficient at their books, how savagely they threw themselves into the work. It was to be no child's play with them, so any one who had a mind for amateuring had best keep out of their way. They kicked desperately and recklessly, as the writer hereof can testify, bearing away from the field, after such an encounter, a shattered shin-bone, the scar of which endureth still. When two of these heroes met, it was fearful; evil passions were aroused; and their outward appearance, all mud-stained and dirty from many a fall and roll upon the ground, with the circular muddy stamp of the ball upon the left cheek, from a savage and well-directed "shot," bore an awful and terror-striking aspect. I have seen a warrior levelled flat by a splendid "shot," which came low and "stinging," and took him on the side of the head with a loud report. Frantic cries and even yells greeted this exploit, and the battle raged afresh, his partisans striving to avenge his fall. The most exciting moment was when one party—say the French—finding the day going against them, came with an organised rush and charge, artfully contriving what was called "a squash." This was the Forlorn Hope of the game, and it often succeeded. The struggle was made to begin near the enemy's gates, the ball was craftily held firm between the feet of a strong French giant. His friends gathered about him, packing themselves as close as they could, and thus a sort of "heart" being formed, everybody came rushing up, and, laying their shoulders and back against the heap, tried desperately to push the whole mass, ball and all, through. But the other side would know their danger; they would rush in also, striving to break it up, and set the ball free. The enormous mass heaved to and fro, and cracked and groaned, now eddying forward, now lurching backward, until at last it

was carried through, or else the attack was routed. Sometimes there were desperate disputes; the ball had been on the verge of going through, on the nice indistinct line, and had been driven back. Then came a Babel of frantic cries. Grimed captains, with perspiration running down the faces and percolating the comic stains on the corners of the mouths, and "bunged-up" eyes, frantically and savagely debated the point. Then Bob Davis and Jacky Smith, each more grotesque for his scars, came rushing up, and interchanged angry words. These warriors all but proposed settling the matter there and then, according to the usage common among gentlemen, had not a master (a grotesque peace-maker himself, with a swelled mouth and battered helmet) promptly interfered and parted them. Then, when the clock struck the last hour, what shouting and proclamation of victory! And it was long remembered how an eager master, flushed with the triumph his own good legs had not a little contributed to gain, had been seen at a window, frantically firing out pistols over the heads of the procession passing below. Not the least unpleasant part was the ceremony that took place at dinner; when at second course, to the modest soldiers who had distinguished themselves in battle was publicly distributed an extra pancake in reward of their efforts. Neither medal, nor even pecuniary recompense, could have been half so welcome.

This was for winter; but the summer days and summer evenings had their charms also. As on a June Sunday evening, when the whole house gathered for the DOUBLE CRICKET—an inspiring pastime peculiar to Our School. Here again we have two sides, each about eighty strong. The "wickets" are two stones, like milestones, placed rather nearer than the common wickets; and the balls are large "softish" balls, double the size of a cricket-ball, and covered with white leather. Now the fun begins. The eighty "go in," and the other eighty stand out, to "tag" and field; only the fielding consists in standing in as close as possible, and blocking every possible issue for the ball. The bowling is not bowling, but a swift jerk. The ground is very hard, and very like a macadamised road. The result is a scene of roaring and delightful animation. A man is jerked out about every ten seconds; if he hits the ball awry, it is stopped a few yards away. His vis-à-vis has begun to run; and all the world is roaring frantically to him to run, and he gets bewildered, and is happily put out in a second. The sound of the flop of the ball on the milestone is very satisfactory, and is always greeted with delight. There is fresh satisfaction, too, in its not being so hard as a cricket-ball, and every one hurls it straight at the stone with utter recklessness as to the limbs of the batsman. The scene of confusion, the rapidity with which batters are toppled over, like ninepins, by a masterly bowler; the shouting, and roaring, and laughter, and the yell of applause when the dashing batsman has sent the ball well in the air over the heads of all the eighty; make up a most exhilarating scene to think of.

But we had other summer evenings. It has been mentioned that there was a charming country about our school. It was wide, open, with rude hills in the distance; with some noble rivers, three or four miles away; pretty villages, a grand old abbey close by, to say nothing of a deer park, which was part of our patrimony. In the summer time all these advantages became delightful; the air was perfumed, the waters glittered, the grass was of the greenest and softest. In our deer park were brooks and brooklets, plentifully stocked with fish. What walks on holidays to established and traditional objects of attraction! And never were walks so enjoyed. A walk to the abbey, a walk to a distant market town, a walk up the great mountain, Hendle, that frowned on us solemnly always, from afar off, like a wicked master; but this was a task which required enormous strength and energy to be completed within the time before dinner, and therefore only the strong, rude, and muscular beings before alluded to were allowed to attempt it. About a mile or two away were some sweet spots, suited for the summer days, and which I see now, like pictures. There was an old bridge, ruined and disused (a new and grander bridge crossed some fifty yards higher up), of which only an arch or two was left. Here the broad river ran and rippled over a shallow bed, down jagged little shelves of rock, round awkward boulders of stone. On either side were banks and overhanging trees, underneath which was the most delightful and shadiest spot that could be conceived. The music of the water was soft, broken only by the sound of carriages—the “Whitechapel” was the popular vehicle of the district—crossing the new bridge. High up, where it wound broadly, we could see the patient salmon-fisher, with his great rod. Shady retreat! Yet, with the sun well out, and the dragon-flies fluttering, how many delicious hours have gone by there!

Up and down in the deer park were many soft corners and shady places which we affected a good deal. We had a band, an orchestra, and a “military band,” some five-and-twenty strong, under the direction of a gentleman from the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. This was no sham; big drum, little drum, ophicleide, trombones, clarionets, and all the legitimate elements. The writer was first piccolo. Our performances were very respectable indeed, and of those delectable summer evenings, when the whole house set off for a bivouac in one of the shady oases in the park, we sometimes shouldered our music-stands and instruments, and, drawing up in the conventional circle, played the most popular pieces of our repertoire. There was a Duke of Kent’s Quick Step (this we had routed out of old band books as being simple and easy, and perhaps military), and we knew it out of book, and marched at the head of the school, playing it with spirit. Of a softer and modern character was the Valse d’Amitié, composed by our Covent Garden leader, and which was a tender, “dying fall” measure, which has always an association in my mind with those green trees

and that soft sward. He was a pale, bald, small, little man with the *glassiest* spectacles I ever saw, who worked at our band with unflagging energy, and who I hope by this time—though I fear not—may be violino primo of the Covent Garden orchestra, with the reversion of Mr. Costa’s bâton.

We, of course, had our ranks and classes. The most envied were the eighteen or twenty gentlemen who lived in a large and sumptuous palace of their own, separated from ours by gardens and a charming walk of about three minutes; who were fed luxuriously, and were supposed to do just as they liked. These gentlemen paid each one hundred guineas a year, wore shooting-coats and wide-awake hats,—*smoked*, O Heavens! and were called Epicureans. Later, I became an Epicurean myself, and found the life very enjoyable, though more restrained than the popular idea supposed. We prepared for college, attended lectures on the humanities (whatever they were), studied the belles lettres, and improved ourselves in single-stick. In our shooting-coats, however, lay our pride and strength, and in this department we boasted an inconceivable variety of check and tweed. As the common herd saw us wandering among our groves, enjoying a tranquil pipe, we knew what their feelings must be.

Our first class, which corresponded to the “sixth form” at older schools, were a body of some thirty giants, as they seemed to me when I was first “left behind,” O, cruel day! a shrinking and abashed urchin. They were called Logicians, or some name like it, and part of this Polypheme effect was owing to their wearing blue-tailed coats with gilt buttons, the enforced uniform of the establishment. Was this an artifice to strike awe, and ensure an additional respect? I remember the dignity with which one of these Beings inflicted punishment on a member of the lowest school, contemptuously known as The Brats. He took his collar betwixt his finger and thumb as he would take up a cat, gave him two lazy kicks behind, and then set him free, and pursued his course without a word. There was a secret hint here, as of undeveloped and slumbering strength. The Logicians were the guardians of law and order—the Prætorians of the state. They were not popular, yet it was considered a distinction to be seen with a Logician. They had privileges. One of these was, I recollect, the use of two wooden cruet-stands at dinner. Such luxuries dared not be entrusted to the indiscriminate mob, who would have used the pepper and mustard as missiles. Not, indeed, that the Logicians cared much for the mere mustard and pepper, but the cruet-stands were looked on as emblems of independence—as a charter, so to speak—and any reformer who should have dared to propose abolishing them would have provoked a dangerous émeute.

III. THE BARRING-OUT YEAR.

Shall I ever forget the famous year of the Barring Out! You and I, dear Tom (not of the

Brown Jug), have often talked that scene over, even into the watches of the night, inhaling the soothing Havannah. Yet not so long, either. Of all the thirty or forty who started with us in the lower class, you and I, some way, have been the only elements that have drifted up together!

But the Barring Out! So craftily planned by the disaffected—a small band—so darkly shrouded—that none of the public had an idea whence the blow was to fall. There were men, greater than their station in heart and physical size, the equal of the Logicians, but who were in a lower class, and not glorified by blue coats and gilt buttons. These felt their degradation. The iron entered their soul. Of these were little North, a gay bright brisk little fellow, full of indomitable spirit and energy. He would have fearlessly stood up to the best man in the place, no matter what his size. He was good—true as steel—idle—a little satirical: but game. He was no one's enemy, except, perhaps, his own. There was big Jeffreys, a heavy fellow, good in his way, too, and a few more. It was these daring conspirators who planned the whole coup. It was only on the day itself that men's minds—boys' minds I should say—became oppressed with a sense that a blow was to be struck before nightfall.

Some of us shook our heads; more of us openly scoffed at the notion. Towards noon the nature of the scheme was whispered. More smiles and incredulity. Those who knew young North shook their heads again. He was not a lad to make vain or empty professions. It came to five o'clock. At half-past five, began what were called Night Studies. A great corridor ran down the basement, and off this corridor were the play-rooms. Up and down the corridor paced the three masters or prefects, as they were called, who did the police work of the house. These officers went off duty during school-time, and came on during studies and play-time. We were in the first play-room, sitting round the fire, telling stories, walking up and down in pairs, playing chess, reading, or showing the treasures of our "tables" (for every boy was allowed a "table," with a lock and key, in which he kept all his ruder apparel, skates, &c.). The prefects walking up and down the gallery looked in now and again, and saw that order reigned in our little Warsaw. It was past five. Suddenly a little group were seen standing together, the conspicuous parties of which were little North and big Jeffreys. It seemed like a low and earnest discussion. We afterwards learned that there was an altercation about the post of danger, and that "big Jeffreys" rather hung back from the honour of occupying it. This, at least, was the rumour. But in another moment our amazed eyes saw little North—he was always bravest of the brave—run to the door, shut it, and in the twinkling of an eye thrust a wedge, skilfully prepared for the purpose, over the latch. Other amazed eyes saw big Jeffreys lift his long arm and promptly "turn

out" the gas. In a moment we were in semi-darkness. In another moment a huge barricade of tables had been piled up on each other against the door, à la Française—no despotism or the myrmidons of despotism could burst it in—and the barring-out was accomplished.

Every one was awestruck and aghast. The boldness of the step took away our breaths. We could hardly realise the situation. It was a moment of intense anxiety when the sound of some one *trying the latch outside* was heard. The authorities knew what had taken place now. Expresses were no doubt on their way to all parts of the house with the news of the revolt.

After the first, we began to enjoy our situation. We, who were mere passive instruments, could almost chuckle; for the others, in less fortunate play-rooms, were already hard and fast at work at studies. Some one now lighted the lamps, and things began to go cheerfully. It was really enjoyable. Half an hour went by; an hour. It was a capital idea—for those whose hands were unstained by guilt. Delightful the notion of missing studies, and perhaps school, and of sleeping there for the night, each on his own table. The only objection was, it was drawing on towards supper-time, and there was too much reason to fear that the rebels had taken no thought of provisioning the garrison. Still, even *that*—the starvation—might add a piquancy to the situation.

Alas! there was a danger we had not thought of. The large Logicians had been noticed looking on gloomily at the revolt, and apparently not enjoying the barricade. Afterwards they had been noticed whispering together in a corner. The republican chiefs, full of spirits, were receiving congratulations and noisily planning the new arrangements—allotting offices under their government—when suddenly we heard a scuffling and a crash. The Logicians had rushed forward by concert, had assaulted the barricade, were hurling the tables to this side and that, and before any one could recover from his surprise had made a clean sweep of the whole. In another moment all was clear, and the wedge which young North had so gallantly rushed forward to insert, was plucked forth from over the latch and the door thrown open! It was an ignominious break-down. The ringleaders looked on at their failure sullenly, prepared for the worst.

In a second the officers of justice were on the ground. The crisis was too serious for them to deal with, so a greater than they came down and took the command with a short speech. Its purport was, that now there was but one point to consider, namely, the discovery of the ringleaders "in this atrocious outrage." Until they gave themselves up, or were given up by the friends of Law and Order, all recreation would be suspended until further notice. Now we might go in to supper.

It was something to defile into the great banquetting-hall, the observed of all, the heroes of the barricades; but it was not something when this meal was over for the observed of all, to walk back straight to the "study place," while the

observers went down to recreation. This continued for a day, when, as might be expected, the gallant North went and gave himself up unconditionally, and his co-conspirators went and did likewise. It was their only course, as the public was murmuring loudly. For North, I am happy to say it ended well. The authorities were touched by his spirit, great interest was made on all sides, and he and his men were let off with a trifling punishment.

IV. THE LOGICIANS' "DO."

During the summer days, there was a general winding up, with examinations for prizes and distributions of rewards. Among the rewards was a delightful institution known as The Good Days, holidays for good behaviour, enhanced, as it seemed to us, by every joy and attraction that mortal boy could desire. An additional whet to their enjoyment was got out of the long faces of our brethren bent over their books, as towards seven A.M. of a glorious morning we trooped past them to go out and get an appetite for breakfast. This was acquired in the Dutch gardens, thrown open to us on the Good Days; and we then did justice to the admirable muffins, tea, coffee, and broiled matters provided for us by the Masters of Good Days, who knew their way to boys' hearts. The pleasure we had in this meal, too, was enhanced by knowing that our unparticipating friends were being regaled with plain bread and warm milk, out of good crockery bowls.

The entertainment of the day was in fishing the great river with large nets, and the special fun lay in going up to one's middle in the water and getting as generally wet as possible. Yet there was in this thorough enjoyment. Then came dinner, furnished with all the luxuries of the place; and *wine*—yes, wine—a very little of which, it was noticed, affected the heads of the juniors. Again comes up the picture of the evening wanderings among the soft beauties of our park, among its glades, and banks, and pleasant places; the whole concluding with another sort of fishing, which had its own attractions. There were little silvery brooks that coursed down from many hills, and wound and straggled in all directions, very strong and clear, and made a sort of jingling metallic music everywhere. They were Nature's musical-boxes, and we might slip over them in places, or cross by little wooden bridges. The water was the clearest and most delicious of waters, and they were stocked with fish reputed of delicious savour. Some one comes with a little bag net and stops the way with it; and then our whole riotous party strip off shoes and stockings, tuck up trousers, and, armed with strong sticks, at a given signal begin some two hundred yards above the net. The silvery little trout just thinking of bedtime, in the snug earthy corners under the banks, must have thought the end of *their* world had come. For never was there such a routing and poking and shouting and upturning of every stone and nature generally. The procession made its way slowly down to the bag net, bringing convulsion with it, and when the work was done, paused

to see the result. The little trout had fled for their lives, and were found huddled in abundance in the fatal net, whence they were transported to the great kitchen and promptly fried for supper, with all the appliances of modern art.

During those jocular times, those of our Logicians whose last year of residence it was, and whose last month it was, were treated with a kindly indulgence. Moderate infractions of discipline were overlooked or gently reproved. Towards each other they had more than common friendly bearing, for they had all made the long scholastic journey for some seven years, and knew each other well. They were now to disperse. My own recollections of that last month are very pleasant. Our paths were made smooth indeed. We had a master stern and severe on duty, almost Spartan in his discipline, dark and Velasquez-looking, and whose eye made us uncomfortable. Yet, though his hand was iron, we liked him. I did cordially, though at times he leaned on me pretty hardly, for I knew he did not spare himself. And a trait that I heard of him added to this respect. He had been teaching a huge school of a thousand or so poor children, in a great manufacturing town, and a friend had noticed with surprise that he was keeping very late vigils, sitting up till all hours. He went in one night, and found him practising round-hand in a copy-book, to improve the naturally vile hand he wrote, and to teach the children better. And this was an accomplished scholar. Out of school-time he had a light humour and bonhomie which we all enjoyed.

A special and privileged festival for departing Logicians was what was called, in the school patois, their "Do." We had been specially steady this year, and at one season of disaffection had rallied round the throne and constitution, and had stood firm when all about us were tainted with disloyalty. On these grounds it was determined to compliment us with a "Do" of more than usual magnificence. It was about a week before we departed. In order to respond to and co-operate with so much liberality, we had determined to raise moneys among ourselves, so as to make the festival yet more magnificent, and, with this view, we had been assessing ourselves for weeks past, in a rate of some shillings. The result was a handsome sum on the morning of the festival.

The previous night had been the scene of a revel. The enjoyment was a little marred—though perhaps it lent a piquancy and awful mystery—by a painful fracas that occurred during the revel. One of our Logicians was a large, heavily-built fellow, whose prowess at football was the object of envy and secret admiration, but whose intellectual acquirements did not at all keep pace. Between him and our master much unpleasantness used to arise periodically on this score. Latterly Big Hoskins—for so he was familiarly known—had become aggrieved. He was heard going about saying that "old Franklin" had a grudge against him, that it was monstrous and unfair "being down on a fellow always," and that he meant to be even with old Franklin

one of these days. These dark hints caused much alarm and expectation. But on the festival day rumour went abroad that matters had come to a crisis. Aboard the punt, where the nets were being got in, a warm altercation had taken place. The smouldering sense of wrong, inflamed by the feeling that the day of freedom was approaching, had freed Big Hoskins's tongue. He had given cheek, and our iron master had sternly ordered him home to "school;" an order which, however, he recalled after a moment's reflection, good naturedly making allowance for the saturnalian character of the day. But at supper, over the silver bowl, it broke out afresh. Big Hoskins, who had been looking on the day as a victory, and who considered that "old Franklin" had knocked under, was called on for a song, and, with a look of triumph, struck into a comic dialogue between a farmer and his wife, which was justly considered his *cheval de bataille*, and a triumph of dramatic feeling. But on this occasion he artfully interpolated an expression—a catch word of our iron master's—and made it recur (in defiance of all rhyme, metre, and music) again and again, with unmistakable emphasis and point. We were but a mob, a herd, and were ready to laugh or do anything, like grown-up mobs and herds, if there were but a Jack Cade to lead us. So we roared, and enjoyed the thing insanely, taking no thought of the hurt and wounded look upon our iron master's face. But after the revels were over for the night, and we were going up to bed, I recall Bill Somebody coming to me, with deep awe and silent mystery, and motioning me to come and look over the banister. Stealing out without our shoes, we did so, and there saw, and heard too, Bill Hoskins and our iron master "at it." The latter was speaking gravely and sternly: remonstrating, it almost seemed. Bill Hoskins, with his hand on his breast (a very poor imitation of a Roman senator), and perhaps a little inflamed by frequent reference to the great silver bowl, was talking loudly and defiantly. He came up presently, and told us of the interview. "Old Franklin" (by the way, this term was wholly unmerited, old Franklin being quite young and hale; but it was considered a judicious term of deep contempt)—"old Franklin had talked of stopping him to-morrow from the Do; he'd like to see him; old Franklin had said, as it was the end of the year, he *might* take no notice until to-morrow was over. Big Hoskins (with a scornful laugh) thought so. He knew it would come to that. He was not to be intimidated by a man like "old Franklin."

We went to bed half awestruck, half admiring; for these were new and terrible radical doctrines. Yet there was a piquancy in the transaction, and we had rather it occurred, on the whole.

Here were we now awakening on the morning of the Do. Festival, indeed! We rose betimes, as we did always, but on this morning it was not an enforced rising. It was raining heavily, but rain made it none the worse, or even made it all the better. Our friend and guide had mustered a number of ancient um-

brellas, which were distributed among us, and a number of cloaks as ancient, from the armouries of the house; thus accoutred, we set forth at half-past six. I see that delightful progress even now, for it was a warm soft morning for all its rain, and everything that was green looked the fresher.

Our destination was a small manufacturing town fourteen miles away—a distance to be made before breakfast, which meal was to be had at the principal inn of the place. O, luxury! Buttered toast and muffins and coffee were before our eyes during that walk, and quickened our steps if they at all flagged. Who would walk fourteen miles before breakfast to see a small manufacturing town? But to us, in the then dearth of objects of curiosity, it had all the charms of sight-seeing at a foreign town. We walked with a will, taking short cuts through private properties, across green fields, through plantations, down valleys, across brooks. We were delighted with everything, and chattered all the way. Our master kept pace with us, both physically and morally. It was surprising all the things we saw that morning, and the enjoyment with which we saw them. We beat the excellent Mrs. Barbauld and her "good boy" in "eyes and no eyes," to sticks. And the rain, like a good creature, soon abated—not that we were tired of him—and cleared away and never returned during the day, leaving behind him everything freshened, cool, and gorgeous in colour. Then the sun was seen coming out slowly, and we still tramped on.

It was full eleven when we entered the red-brick manufacturing town and made straight for the red-brick inn—a Red Lion or a Black Bull, I forget which—and which Lion or Bull seemed a little surprised by our incursion. Breakfast was at once ordered on a splendid and lavish scale—everything fried, everything hot, everything buttery, and rich, and steaming to be laid on at once and kept going. All the resources of the house were strained to supply us, and I fear the proprietor did not find us profitable visitors. Wilson, our treasurer, had a little bag in which was the "rate in aid," all in shillings, out of which he defrayed the charges. Then we went forth to look at the lions; a factory, another factory, and gaudy shops and the people, and a hundred such things. It was all curious, and welcome, and amusing, and it brought us on to two o'clock, when we were to begin walking again. There was an old church to be seen two or three miles away, by a river, and we pushed on to that. The clergyman of the place, in a white linen coat and straw hat, came out and showed it to us and did the honours, mentioning something about a glass of wine to our chief—*meaning him only*—a civility which, I am glad to say, he had too fine a sense of delicacy to accept.

We parted from the straw hat—not in unkindness, though—and pushed on a mile or so further, to a little town called Blackwell, and which had just opened a new market-house, which we admired much. So, too, did we admire a certain grocer's shop, which, in its line, seemed the finest thing in all our experience. We

surprised the grocer, too, by our incursion filling up his little establishment in a very alarming way. What attracted us were rows and rows of gorgeous bottles, as fine as bottles could be, containing British wines of every vintage and degree mortal man could desire. Any sort we chose to name, he brought out. Sherry and port, of course; but the marvel was champagne, engaged to make the cork fly out with the proper noise. We were dazzled, and gave him a large order.

Then we set forward again. There was an old manor-house, where King Henry had once stayed—Kington Tower—yet to be seen, and we pushed on for *that*. A charming place, with hall, and rooms, and arches, and oak-work, still to be seen; but, with sad irreverence, converted into a barn. The meeting expressed itself strongly on this head.

Now the day was beginning to wane, the sun to go down. Some of us were "giving in," especially at the thought of so many miles to go back. Tom—our particular friend, best of giants—was exhausted, and would take a "White-chapel" home at the next inn. This was against discipline; but on Good Days we might do anything. So, too, was that production of cigars and pipes, and a special Swiss wooden pipe of mine, which, after a long seclusion of a year, was brought out, and extorted universal admiration. I cannot say it was an agreeable process, for the tobacco being contraband, and acquired at great risk and by inexperienced judges, was of the worst known description, and, if possible, even more strong than bad. There was a ghastly face or two presently, and an ominous hanging behind; and I suspect the offence against the Law brought with it its own punishment. But we weathered that, as we had weathered everything else, by indomitable energy; though now, indeed, we were all beginning to flag, and think wistfully of "Whitechaps." So our good guide and philosopher, seeing how things were, proposed the friendly railway close by, and we joyfully acceded.

Towards seven we came staggering in, utterly beat; but here was dinner, and *that* roused us like a trumpet. The habitual hour of the house was one o'clock; we were to dine sumptuously at seven. We dressed with infinite care, came down, and were received formally by the HEAD OF THE HOUSE, with great politeness and cordiality. This was an honour we had not dreamed of, and a fresh testimonial to our virtues and services. Mantling over with genial feeling, we spoke of it warmly "as so nice," as "a real gentlemanly thing;" and what not. It was indeed a graceful homage, as was also the attendance of the second in command.

The banquet was sumptuous; a rich and fragrant ham dwells specially in my memory. We tried the champagne, of British make, with the other vintages (at one and threepence a flask), which a sense of self-respect made us publicly profess to relish, but which cool reflection

pronounced medicinal and sickly, which cooler reflection still, at this distance of time, makes me advisedly pronounce simply detestable and all but poisonous. The champagne (which broke down even in its frothing and pretension) came out in an orderly noiseless way, and reminded all beholders of the cough mixture supplied in the infirmary for all coughs indiscriminately.

Still this was only a trifle, and caused great amusement. We had the genuine wine to fall back on; and later, the great silver bowl, without which no festival was considered complete. What laughter, and jesting, and dilating on the day's adventures! We had singing, too, when the cloth was "drawn"—to use that old-fashioned phrase—singing of a comic and humorous sort, and a little speeching. The Head of the House rose to make a few observations—short and to the point—in praise of "our excellent friend and master, Mr. Franklin," and his "unwearied pains and regard for us always," with much to that effect. There seemed to be a hint that we had not quite understood our "iron master," whom we had often harassed by combination, and to whom we had imputed the basest and most tyrannical of motives. Did we feel a twinge at that moment? Or did the scales fall from our eyes, so long blind? Or was it the generous wine? No; for here was the dark figure rising itself. A few words. Now that we were going to part and go our different ways, we would carry with us his best wishes and affection. Perhaps at times he had given way to more severity, and perhaps temper, than he had intended; but it was all with the best intentions. It was, indeed. It was for our good. It was impossible at all moments to control ourselves, and if there had been any misunderstanding, he hoped it would be banished now. For the moment we felt the pangs of remorse and the prickings of conscience, and perhaps felt a little hostile towards Big Hoskins, who was still full of his injuries, and not to be propitiated. Big Hoskins, the sense of his wrongs perhaps inflamed by the wine of the house, was leaning back in his chair, with a half-scornful look on his face. He was not to be taken in by such "gammon;" he soon, however, gave way to better feelings, and to this hour I feel a regret that shyness, or the natural surprise of the moment, prevented one of us from rising and making a feeling response. But we were overshadowed by the presence of those great beings, and felt that it would be too daring a task, and so that little passage of emotion went by, and the tide of fun and joke—reintroduced by Big Hoskins—flowed on once more. Pleasant night—delightful night—prolonged until past ten o'clock—considered exquisitely late hours, for all the common herd had been at roost since nine.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

CHAPTER III. THE PHILISTINES.

THE cold weather, which in the country produced rugged roads and ice-bound ponds; which frosted the leafless branches of the trees with a silver tint, and gave a thousand different fantastic but ever lovely hues and shapes to nature; had no such pleasant refreshing effect in London, where the frost, ere three hours old, was beaten into mud under foot, ran drizzling in dirty streams from house-tops, and subsided into rain and fog before the daylight had disappeared. The day succeeding that on which George Dallas had entered the town of Amherst was a thorough specimen of what London can do when put to its worst. It was bad in the large thoroughfares where the passing crowds jostled each other ill temperedly, digging at each other's umbrellas, and viciously contesting every inch of foot pavement, where the omnibus wheels revolved amid mud-ruts, and every passing cab-horse produced a fountain of slush and spray. But it was even worse in the by-streets, where an attempt at sweeping had been made, where the mud lay in a thick slimy, shiny tide between the narrow ridges of footpath, where the tall houses, so close together that they completely filtered the air and light and retained nothing but the darkness and the dirt, were splashed with mud to their first-floor windows, and whose inhabitants or visitors desirous of crossing the road had to proceed to the junction with the main street, and, after tacking across in comparative cleanliness, commence their descent on the opposite side.

In the front room of the first floor of a house in such a street, South Molton-street, connecting Oxford-street the plebeian, with Brook-street the superb, just as the feeble glimmer of daylight which had vouchsafed itself during the day was beginning to wax even feebler, previous to its sudden departure, a man sat astride a chair, sunk in thought. He had apparently just entered, for he still wore his hat and overcoat, though the former was pushed to the back of his head, and the latter thrown negligently open. He was a tall handsome man, with keen black eyes glancing sharply, with thick black brows, a long straight

nose, thin tight lips unshrouded by moustache or beard, and a small round chin. He had full flowing black whiskers, and the blue line round his mouth showed that the beard was naturally strong; had he suffered it to grow, he might have passed for an Italian. As it was, there was no mistaking him for anything but an Englishman—darker, harder-looking than most of his race, but an Englishman. His face, especially round the eyes, was flushed and marked and lined, telling of reckless dissipation. There was a something not exactly fast, but yet slangy, in the cut of his clothes and in the manner in which he wore them; his attitude as he sat at the window with his hands clasped in front of him over the back rail of his chair, his knees straight out and his feet drawn back, as a man sits a horse at a hunt, was in its best aspect suggestive of the mess-room: in its worst, of the billiard-room. And yet there was an indescribable something in the general aspect of the man, in the very ease of his position, in the shape of the hands clasped in front of him, in the manner, slight as it was, in which now and again he would turn on his chair and peer back into the darkness behind him, by which you would have known that he had had a refined education, and had been conversant with the manners of society.

Nor would you have been wrong. In Burke's Landed Gentry, the Rouths of Carr Abbey take up their full quota of pages, and when the county election for Herefordshire comes off, the liberal agent is forced to bring to bear all the science he can boast of, to counteract the influence which the never-failing adhesion of the old family throws into the Tory scale. Never having risen, never for an instant having dreamed of demeaning themselves by rising, above the squirearchy, owners of the largest and best herds in all that splendid cattle-breeding county, high-sheriffs and chairmen of quarter-sessions as though by prescriptive right, perpetual presidents of agricultural societies, and in reality taking precedence immediately after the lord-lieutenant, the Rouths of Carr Abbey, from time immemorial, have sent their sons to Oxford, and their daughters to court, and have never, save in one instance, had to blush for their children.

Save in one instance. The last entry in the old family Bible of Carr Abbey is erased by a thick black line. The old squire speaks habitually

of "My only son, William;" and should a stranger, dining at the Abbey, casually refer to the picture, by Lawrence, of two little boys, one riding a pony, the younger deeking a dog's neck with ribbon, he is, if the squire has not heard his question, motioned in dumb show to silence, or is replied to by the squire himself that "that boy is—lost, sir."

That boy, Stewart Routh, the man looking out of the window in South Molton-street, was captain of the boat at Eton, and first favourite, for a time, both with the dons and undergraduates at Oxford. Rumours of high play at cards developing into fact of perpetually sported "oak," non-attendance at chapel, and frequent shirking of classes, lessened the esteem in which Mr. Routh was held by the authorities; and a written confession handed to the dean, after being obtained by parental pressure, from Mr. Albert Grüntz, of Christ Church, son of and heir to Mr. Jacob Grüntz, sugar-baker, of St. Mary Axe, in the city of London, and Balmoral-gardens, Hyde Park, a confession to the effect that he, Mr. A. Grüntz, had lost the sum of two thousand pounds to Mr. S. Routh, at a game played with dice, and known as French hazard, procured the dismissal of Mr. S. Routh from the seat of learning. At Carr Abbey, whither he retired, his stay was shortened by the arrival of another document from Oxford, this time signed by Lord Hawkhurst, gentleman commoner of Christ Church, and Arthur Wardroper of Balliol, setting forth that Mr. S. Routh, while playing hazard in Mr. Grüntz's rooms, had been caught there *in flagrante delicto* in the act of cheating by "securing," i.e. retaining in his fingers, one of the dice which he should have shaken from the box. It was the receipt of this letter that caused the squire to make the erasure in the family Bible, and to look upon his youngest son as dead.

Driven from the paternal roof, Mr. Stewart Routh descended upon the pleasant town of Boulogne, whence, after a short stay not unmarked by many victories over the old and young gentlemen who frequent the card-tables at the *Établissement des Bains*, from whom he carried off desirable trophies, he proceeded to the baths and gambling-houses of Ems, Homburg, and Baden-Baden. It was at the last-mentioned place, and when in the very noon and full tide of success, that he was struck down by a fever, so virulent that the affrighted servants of the hotel refused to wait upon him. No nurse could be prevailed upon to undertake to attend him; and he would have been left to die for want of proper care, had not a young Englishwoman, named Harriet Creswick, travelling in the capacity of nursery-governess to Lord de Mauleverer's family (then passing through Baden on their way to winter in Rome), come to the rescue. Declaring that her countryman should not perish like a dog, she there and then devoted herself to attendance on the sick man. It need scarcely be told that Lady de Mauleverer, protesting against "such extraordinary

conduct," intimated to Miss Creswick that her connexion with her noble charges must cease at once and for ever. But it is noteworthy that in such a man as Stewart Routh had hitherto proved himself, a spirit of gratitude should have been so strongly aroused, that when his sense and speech returned to him, in weak and faltering accents he implored the woman who had so tenderly nursed him through his illness, to become his wife. It is quite needless to say that his friends, on hearing of it, averred, some that he thought he was going to die, and that it did not matter to him what he did, while it might have pleased the young lady; others, that he was a particularly knowing card whose brains had never deserted him, even when he was at his worst, and that he had discovered in Harriet Creswick a woman exactly fitted, by physical and mental qualifications, efficiently to help him as his partner in playing the great game of life. Be it as it may—and people will talk, especially in such circles—the fact remains that on his sick couch at the *Hollandischer Hof*, Baden-Baden, Stewart Routh proposed to Harriet Creswick, and was accepted; that so soon as he could safely be left, she departed for England; and that within a month they were married in London.

Of that one event at least in all his eventful life, Stewart Routh had never repented. Through all his vicissitudes of fortune his wife had been by his side, and, as in the long run, chance had been against him, taking the heaviest portion of his burden on herself. Harriet Routh's was an untiring, undying, unquestioning love or worship of her husband. The revelation of his—to say the least of it—loose mode of life, the shifts and expedients to which he resorted for getting money, the questionable company in which he habitually lived, would have told with fatal effect on a devotion less thorough, a passion more transient. Harriet herself, who had been brought up staidly at an Institution, which she had only quitted to join the family with whom she was travelling when she arrived at Baden—Harriet herself at first shrunk back stunned and stupefied by the revelations of an unknown life which burst upon her a few days after her marriage. But her love bore her through it. As the dyer's hand assimilates to that it works in, so gradually did Harriet Routh endue herself with her husband's tone, temper, and train of thought, until, having become almost his second self, she was his most trusted ally, his safest counsellor in all the strange schemes by which he made out life. In the early days after their marriage she had talked to him once, only once, and then but for a few minutes, of reformation, of something better and more reputable, of doing with less money, to be obtained by the exercise of his great talents in some legitimate manner. And her husband, with the nearest approach to harshness that before or since he had ever assumed, told her that his time for that kind of thing was past and gone for ever, that she must forget all

the childish romance that they had taught her at the Institution, that she must sink or swim with him, and be prepared to cast in her lot with that kind of existence which had become his second nature, and out of which he could never hope to move. Even if he could move from it, he added, he did not think that he would wish to do so, and there must be an end to the matter.

There was an end to the matter. From that time forth, Harriet Routh buried her past, buried her former self, and devoted herself, soul and body, to her husband. Her influence over him strengthened with each year that they lived together, and was traceable in many little ways. The fact once faced, that their precarious livelihood was to be earned by the exercise of sharpness superior to that enjoyed by those with whom they were brought into contact, Harriet laid herself out at once for the fulfilment of her new duties, and in a very short time compelled her husband's surprised laudation of the ease and coolness with which she discharged them. There were no other women in that strange society; but if there had been, Harriet would have queened it over them, not merely by her beauty, but by her bright spirit, her quick appreciation, her thorough readiness to enter exactly into the fancy of the moment. The men who lost their money to Routh and his companion, treated her not merely with a punctilio which forbade the smallest verbal excess, but treated their losses with comparative good humour so long as Mrs. Routh was present. The men who looked up to Routh as the arch concocter of and prime mover in all their dark deeds, had a blind faith in her, and their first question, on the suggestion of any scheme, would be "what Mrs. Routh thought of it." Ah, the change, the change! The favourite pupil of the Institution, who used to take such close notes of the sermon on Sunday mornings, and illustrate the chaplain's meaning with such apposite texts from other portions of Scripture, as quite to astonish the chaplain himself, which perhaps was not to be wondered at, as the chaplain (a bibulous old gentleman, who had been appointed on the strength of his social qualities by the committee, who valued him as "a parson, you know, without any nonsense about him") was in the habit of purchasing his discourses ready made, and only just ran them through on Saturday nights. The show pupil of the Institution, who did all kinds of arithmetical problems "in her head," by which the worthy instructors meant without the aid of paper and pencil—the staid and decorous pupil of the Institution, who, when after her last examination she was quitting the table loaded with prizes—books—was called back by the bishop of the diocese, who with feeble hands pinned a silver medal on to her dress, and said, in a trembling voice, "I had nearly forgotten the best of all. This is in testimony of your excellent conduct, my dear." What was become of this model miss? She was utilising her talents in a different way. That was all. The memory which had enabled her to

summarise and annotate the chaplain's sermons now served as her husband's note-book, and was stored with all kinds of odd information, "good things" to "come off," trials of horses, names and fortunes of heirs who had just succeeded to their estates, lists of their most pressing debts, names of the men who were supposed to be doubtful in money matters, and with whom it was thought inexpedient to bet or play—all these matters dwelt in Harriet Routh's brain, and her husband had only to turn his head and ask, "What is it, Harry?" to have the information at once. The arithmetical quickness stood her in good stead, in the calculation of odds on all kinds of sporting events, on the clear knowledge of which the success of most of Routh's business depended; and as for the good conduct—well, the worthy bishop would have held up his hands in pious horror at the life led by the favourite pupil of the Institution, and at her surroundings; but against Mrs. Routh, as Mrs. Routh, as the devoted, affectionate, self-denying, spotless wife, the veriest ribald in all that loose crew had never ventured to breathe a doubt.

Devoted and affectionate! See her now as she comes quietly into the room—a small compact partridge of a woman with deep blue eyes in a very pale face, with smooth shining light brown hair falling on either side in two long curls, and gathered into a clump at the back of her head, with an impertinent nose only just redeemed from being a snub, with a small mouth, and a very provoking pattable chin. See how she steals behind her husband, her dark linsey dress draping her closely and easily, and not making the slightest rustle; her round arm showing its symmetry in her tight sleeve twining round his neck; her plump shapely hand resting on his head; her pale cheek laid against his face. Devoted and affectionate! No simulation here.

"Anything gone wrong, Stewart?" she asked, in a very sweet voice.

"No, dear. Why?" said Routh, who was now sitting at a table strewn with papers, a pen in his right hand, and his left supporting his handsome worn face.

"You looked gloomy, I thought; but, if you say so, it's all right," returned his wife, cheerfully, leaving his side as she spoke, and proceeding to sweep up the hearth, put on fresh coals, and make the whole room look comfortable, with a few rapid indefinable touches. Then she sat down in a low chair by the fire, perfectly still, and turned her calm pale face to her husband with a business-like air. He made some idle scratches with his pen in silence, then threw it down, and, suddenly pushing away his chair, began to walk up and down the room with long light strides.

"What do you make of Deane, Harriet?" he said, at length, stopping for a moment opposite his wife, and looking closely at her.

"How do you mean? In character or in probabilities? As regards himself, or as regards us?"

"Well, both. I cannot make him out; he is so confoundedly cool, and so infernally sharp. He might be a shrewd man of business, bent on making a fortune, and a good way on the road to his object; and yet he's nothing but a man of pleasure, of what your *good* people would call a wretched low kind of pleasure too, and is spending the fortune instead."

"I don't think so, Stewart," his wife said, quietly and impressively. "I don't think Mr. Deane is spending any very considerable portion of his fortune, whatever it may be."

Stewart had resumed his walking up and down, but listened to her attentively.

"I regard him as a curious combination of the man of business with the man of pleasure. I don't know that we have ever met exactly the kind of person before. He is as calculating in his pleasures as other men are in their business."

"I hate the man," said Routh, with an angry frown and a sullen gesture.

"That's dangerous, Stewart," said Harriet. "You should not allow yourself either to hate or to like any one in whom you are speculating. If you do the one, it will make you incautious; if you do the other, scrupulous. Both are unwise. I do not hate Mr. Deane."

"Fortunately for him, Harry. I think a man would be a great deal safer with my hatred than with yours."

"Possibly," she said, simply, and the slightest smile just parted her crimson lips, and showed a momentary gleam of her white, small, even teeth. "But I do not hate him. I think about him, though; because it is necessary that I should, and I fancy I have found out what he really is."

"Have you, by Jove?" interrupted Routh.

"Then you've done a clever thing, Harriet—clever even for you; for of all the close and impenetrable men I ever met, Deane's the closest and the hardest. When I'm with him, I always feel as if he were trying to *do* me somehow, and as if he would succeed too, though that's not easy. He's as mean as a Scotch shopkeeper, as covetous as a Jew, as wide awake as a Yankee. There's a coolness and a constant air of avowed suspicion about him that drives me mad."

"And yet you ought to have been done with temper and with squeamishness long ago," said Harriet, in a tone of quiet conviction. "How often have you told me, Stewart, that to us, in our way of life, every man must be a puppet, prized in proportion to the readiness with which he dances to our pulling? What should *we* care? I am rendered anxious and uneasy by what you say."

She kept silence for a few moments, and then asked him, in a changed tone,

"How does your account with him stand?"

"My account!—ah, there's the rub! He's so uncommonly sharp, that there's little to be done with him. The fellow's a blackguard—more of a blackguard than I am, I'll swear, and as much of a swindler, at least, in his

capacity for swindling. Only I dare say he has never had occasion to reduce it to practice. And yet there's a hardly veiled insolence in his manner to me, at times, for which I'd like to blow his brains out. He tells me, as plainly as if he said it in words, that he pays me a commission on his pleasures, such as are of my procuring, but that he knows to a penny what he intends to pay, and is not to be drawn into paying a penny more."

Harriet sat thoughtful, and the faintest flush just flickered on her cheek. "Who are his associates, when he is not with you?"

"He keeps that as close as he keeps everything else," replied Routh; "but I have no doubt he makes them come cheap, if indeed he does not get a profit out of them."

"You are taking my view of him, Stewart," said Harriet; then she added, "He has some motive for acting with such caution, no doubt; but a flaw may be found in his armour, when we think fit to look for it. In the mean time, tell me what has set you thinking of him?"

"Dallas's affair, Harriet. I am sorry the poor fellow lost his money to *him*. Hang it, I'm such a bad fellow myself, so utterly gone a 'coon' (his wife winced, and her pale face turned paler), "that it comes ill from me to say so, and I wouldn't, except to you. But I am devilish sorry Deane got the chance of cleaning Dallas out. I like the boy; he's a stupid fool, but not half bad, and he didn't deserve such an ill turn of fortune."

"Well," said Harriet, "take comfort in remembering that you helped him."

She spoke very coldly, and evidently was a stranger to the feelings which actuated Routh.

"*You* don't care about it, that's clear," he remarked.

He was standing still now, leaning against the mantelpiece. She rose and approached him.

"No, Stewart," she said, in her calm sweet voice, which rose a little as she went on, "I do not. I care for nothing on earth (and I never look beyond this earth) but *you*. I have no interest, no solicitude, for any other creature. I cannot feel any, and it is well. Nothing but this would do in my case."

She stood and looked at him with her deep blue eyes, with her hands folded before her, and with a sober seriousness in her face confirmatory of the words she had spoken. He looked at her until she turned away, and a keen observer might have seen in his face the very slightest expression of impatience.

"Shall we go into those accounts now?" said Harriet; "we shall just have time for it, before you go to Flinders'."

She sat down, as she spoke, before a well-appointed writing-table, and, drawing a japan box towards her, opened it, and took out a number of papers. Routh took a seat beside her, and they were soon deep in calculations which would have had little interest or meaning for a third person, had there been one present. By degrees, Routh's face darkened, and many

times he uttered angry oaths; but though Harriet watched him narrowly, and felt in every nerve the annoyance under which he was labouring, she preserved her calm manner, and went steadily on with her task: condensing the contents of several papers into brief memoranda, carefully tearing up the originals, and placing the little heaps methodically beside her for consignment to the fire. At length Routh again stood up, and lounged against the mantelpiece.

"All these *must* be paid, then, Harry?" he asked, as he lighted a cigar, and began to smoke sullenly.

"Yes," she answered, cheerfully. "You know, dear, it has always been our rule, as it has hitherto constituted our safety, to stand well with our tradespeople, and pay *them*, at least, punctually. We have never been so much behind-hand; and as you are about to take a bolder flight than usual, it is doubly necessary that we should be untrammelled. Fancy Flinders getting snubbed by the landlady, or your being arrested for your tailor's bills, at the time when the new Company is coming out!"

"Hang it! the bills all seem to be mine," growled Routh. "Where are yours? Haven't you got any?"

It would have been difficult to induce an unseen witness to believe how utterly unscrupulous, remorseless, conscienceless a woman Harriet Routh had become, if he had seen the smile with which she answered her husband's half-admiring, half-querulous question.

"You know, dear, I don't need much. I have not to keep up appearances as you have. You are in the celebrated category of those who cannot afford to be anything but well dressed. It's no matter for me, but it's a matter of business for you."

"Ah! I might have known you'd have some self-denying, sensible reason ready; but the puzzle to me is, that you always *are* well dressed. By Jove, you're the neatest woman I know, and the prettiest!"

The smile upon her face brightened, but she only shook her head, and went on:

"If Dallas does not get the money, or at least some of it, what do you propose to do? I don't know."

"Do you think he will get the money, Harry? He told *you* all about it. What are the odds?"

"I cannot even guess. All depends on his mother. If she is courageous, and fond of him, she will get it for him, even supposing her immediate control as small as he believes it to be. If she is not courageous, her being fond of him will do very little good, and women are mostly cowards," said Harriet, composedly.

"I never calculated much on the chance," said Routh, "and indeed it would be foolish to take the money if he got it—in that way, at least; for though I am sorry Deane profited by the young fellow, that's because I hate Deane. It's all right, for my purpose, that Dallas should be indebted as largely as may be to me. He's useful in more ways than one; his connexion

with the press serves our turn, Harry, doesn't it? Especially when you work it so well, and give him such judicious hints, such precious confidences."

(Even such praise as this, the woman's perverted nature craved and prized.) "You won't need to take the money from him in formal payment," she said, "if that's what you want to avoid. If he returns with that sum in his pocket, he will not be long before he——"

A knock at the door interrupted her, and George Dallas entered the room.

He looked weary and dispirited, and, before the customary greetings had been exchanged, Routh and Harriet saw that failure had been the result of experiment. Harriet's eyes sought her husband's face, and read in it the extent of his discomfort; and the furtive glance she turned on Dallas was full of resentment. But it found no expression in her voice, as she asked him common-place questions about his journey, and busied herself in setting a chair for him by the fire, putting his hat aside, and begging him to take off his overcoat. He complied. As he threw the coat on a chair, he said, with a very moderately successful attempt at pleasantry:

"I have come back richer than I went, Mrs. Routh, by that elegant garment, and no more."

"Bowled out, eh?" asked Routh, taking the cigar from his mouth, and laying it on the mantelpiece.

"Stumped, sir," replied Dallas.

Harriet said nothing.

"That's bad, Dallas."

"Very bad, my dear fellow, but very true. Look here," the young man continued, with earnestness, "I don't know what to do. I don't, upon my soul? I saw my mother——"

"Yes?" said Harriet, going up to his side. "Well?"

"I saw her, and—and she is unable to help me; she is, indeed, Mrs. Routh," for a bitter smile was on Harriet's face, turned full upon him. "She hasn't the means. I never understood her position until last night, but I understood it then. She is——" he stopped. All his better nature forbade his speaking of his mother's position to these people. Her influence, the gentler, better influence, was over him still. However transitory it might prove, it had not passed yet. Harriet Routh knew as well as he did what the impulse was that arrested his speech.

"You will tell me all about it yet," she thought, and not a sign of impatience appeared in her face.

"I—I need not bore you with details," he went on. "She could not give me the money. She made me understand that. But she promised to get it for me, in some way or other, if the thing is within the reach of possibility, before a month expires. I know she will do it, but I must give her time, if it's to be forthcoming, and you must give me time."

"It's unfortunate, Dallas," Routh began, in a cold voice, "and, of course, it's all very

well your talking to me about giving you time, but how am I to get it? It's no good going over the old story, you know it as well as I do. There, there," he said, shrugging his shoulders, "I must try and get old Shadrach to renew. I suppose we may as well go at once, Dallas." He left the room, followed by Harriet.

George Dallas sat over the fire in an attitude of deep dejection. He was sick at heart, and the revulsion of feeling that had begun at Poynings had not yet ceased. "If I could but be done with it all!" he thought. "But I'm in the groove, I'm in the groove."

"Come along, George," said Routh, who seemed more good humoured than before, as he re-entered the room, soberly attired, as became a man going to do business in the City. "Don't be down-hearted; the old lady will keep her word. Don't be afraid; and, in the mean time, we'll pull through. Put your coat on, and come along. You'll give us some dinner, Harriet, won't you? And if Deane calls, ask him to join us. He won't," he continued, with a laugh, "because he believes in tavern dinners, and puts no faith in ours. We're snobs who live in lodgings, George, you know; but he'll drop in in the evening fast enough."

The application to Mr. Shadrach proved successful, and George Dallas returned with Stewart Routh to his lodgings, more firmly tied to him than ever, by the strong bond of an increased money-obligation.

"Pretty tidy terms, weren't they?" Routh asked Dallas, when he had told Harriet, in answer to her anxious questioning, that the "renewal" had been arranged.

"Very tidy indeed," said poor George, ruefully; "but, Routh, suppose when I do get the money, it's not enough. What's to be done then?"

"Never mind about *then*," said Routh, "*now* is the important matter. Remember that every *then* is made of *nows*, and keep your mind easy. That's philosophy," as Mr. Squeers says. "Your present business is to eat your dinner."

Stewart Routh had thrown off his low spirits, and had all but succeeded in rousing George Dallas from his. Kindly, convivial, only occasionally coarse, he was a dangerously pleasant man at all times, and especially so to George Dallas when Harriet was present; for then his coarseness was entirely laid aside, and her tact, humour, intelligence never failed to please, to animate, and to amuse him. The dinner was a very pleasant one, and, before it had come to a conclusion, George Dallas began to yield as completely as ever to the influence of the man whose enviable knowledge of "life" had been the first medium through which he had attained it. George had forgotten the renewed bill and his late failure for a while, when the mention of Deane's name recalled it to his memory.

"Has Deane been here, Harry?" asked Routh.

"No, Stewart, I have been at home all day, but he has not called."

"Ah—didn't happen to want me, no doubt."

"Have you seen much of him lately, Routh?" inquired George Dallas. "I mean, within the last week or two? While I—while I've been keeping out of the way?" he said, with a nervous laugh.

"Poor boy, you *have* been down on your luck," said Routh. "Seen much of Deane? Oh yes; he's always about—he's here most days, some time in the forenoon."

"In the forenoon, is he? Considering the hours he keeps at night, that surprises me."

"It doesn't surprise *me*. He's very strong—has a splendid constitution, confound him, and has not given it a shake yet. Drink doesn't seem to 'trouble' him in the least."

"He's an odd fellow," said George, thoughtfully. "How coolly he won my money, and what a greenhorn I was, to be sure! I wonder if he would have lost his own so coolly."

"Not a doubt of it," said Routh; "he'd have been satisfied he would make it up out of something else. He *is* an odd fellow, and a deuced unpleasant fellow, to *my* mind."

Harriet looked at her husband with a glance of caution. It was unlike Routh to dwell on a mere personal feeling, or to let so much of his mind be known unnecessarily. He caught the glance and understood it, but it only angered, without otherwise influencing him.

"A low-lived loafer, if ever there was one," he went on, "but useful in his way, Dallas. Every man has a weakness; *his* is to think himself a first-rate billiard player, while he is only a fourth-rate. A man under such a delusion is sure to lose his money to any one who plays better than he does, and I may as well be that man, don't you see?"

"I see perfectly," said George; "but I wish he had been equally mistaken in his notions of his card-playing science; it would have made a serious difference to me."

"Never mind, old fellow," answered Routh; "you shall have your revenge some day. Finish your wine, and Harriet shall give us some music."

She did so. She gave them some music, such as very few can give—music which combines perfection of art with true natural feeling. This woman was a strange anomaly, full of "treasons, stratagems, and spoils," and yet with music in her soul.

Rather early, George Dallas left the pair, but they sat up late, talking earnestly. Things were going ill with Stewart Routh. Some of his choicest and most promising combinations had failed. He had once or twice experienced a not uncommon misfortune in the lot of such men as he;—he had encountered men in his own profession who were as clever as himself, and who, favoured by circumstances and opportunity, had employed their talents at his expense. The swindler had been swindled once or twice, the biter had been bitten, and his temper had not been improved in the process. He

was about, as Harriet had said, to take a new flight, this time, in the direction of operations on the general public, and he had formed designs on Mr. Deane, which did not, in the increased knowledge he had obtained of that gentleman's character, and in the present aspect of affairs, look quite so promising as in the early stage of their acquaintance, six weeks before. The operations of gentlemen of the Routh fraternity are planned and executed with a celerity which seems extraordinary to pursuers of the more legitimate branches of industry. Routh had not passed many hours in Mr. Deane's society (they had met at a low place of amusement, the honours of which Routh was doing to a young Oxonian, full of cash and devoid of brains, whom he had in hand just then), before he had built an elaborate scheme upon the slender foundation of that gentleman's boasted wealth and assumed greenness. His subsequent experience had convinced him of the reality of the first, but had shown him his mistake as to the last, and gradually his mind, usually cool and undaunted, became haunted by an ever-burning desire to possess himself of the money for ever flaunted before his eyes—became haunted, too, by an unreasonable and blind animosity to the stranger, who combined prodigality with calculation, unscrupulous vice with well regulated economy, and the unbridled indulgence of his passions with complete coldness of heart and coolness of temper. Routh had no knowledge of Deane's real position in life, but he had a conviction that had it been, like his own, that of a professional swindler, he would have been a dangerous rival, quite capable of reducing his own occupation and his own profits very considerably. Therefore Routh hated him.

When the conference between Routh and Harriet came to a conclusion, it left the woman visibly troubled. When Routh had been for some time asleep, she still sat by the table, on which her elbows rested, her head on her hands, and the light shining on her fair brown hair. There she sat, until the fire died out, and the late wintry dawn came. She was not unused to such watches; wakefulness was habitual to her, and care had often kept her company. But no vigil had ever tried her so much. Her mind was at work, and suffering. When at length she rose from her chair with an impatient shiver, dark circles were round her blue eyes, and her pure waxen complexion looked thick and yellow. She lighted a candle, turned the gas out, and went for a moment to the window. The cold grey light was beginning to steal through the shutter, which she opened wide, and then looked out. She set the candle down, and leaned idly against the window. Weariness and restlessness were upon her. The street was quite empty, and the houses opposite looked inexpressibly gloomy. "One would think all the people in them were dead instead of asleep," she said, half aloud, as she pulled the blind down with a jerk, and turned away. She went

slowly up-stairs to her bedroom, and as she went, she murmured:

"Where will it end? How will it end? It is an awful risk!"

SCHOOL-DAYS AT SAXONHURST.

V. BREAKING-UP DAY AT SAXONHURST.

THE old custom of "notching off" the days—which dates from Robinson Crusoe, whose vacation, poor dear! was so long in coming—or strictly, of erasing a day every morning, out of an almanack, with a very heavy pen, obtained nowhere to such a degree as at Saxonhurst. Every one had some such little record, and thus quickened the laggard steps of time. There was a peculiar fascination about the closing days. The exquisite idea of "GOING HOME" threw a halo over everything. The festival called "PACKING-UP DAY"—the penultimate day—had a raciness of its own. Great stores were all thrown open; contraband goods seized at the customs on passing the frontier and detained during the pleasure of the authorities, were all honourably restored. So, too, were suits of elegant attire, ball and evening suits (brought for no earthly purpose save to minister to the pride of the owners), ornaments and decorations, books which had not passed the censorship, even pipes and cases of cigars—all were given back in the handsomest manner. Each found his property laid out on his bed neatly, and his trunk beside it. Some of these treasures we could not bring ourselves to pack up, but were displayed, with pardonable pride, on our persons. A greater ceremony came on towards four o'clock, when there was a grand Te Deum sung in the church, accompanied by all the resources of OUR BAND and orchestra—drums, trumpets, hautboys, sackbuts, and all kinds of music, piping and thundering away with prodigious effect. The whole House assisted; and thus the official year was supposed to end. But next day was the true day of glory—our BREAKING-UP DAY—the day when the fathers, uncles, brothers, and guardians, came from distances to see their young relatives covered with glory; when the neighbouring squires drove up the long avenue; and when, in the great room, there was an "Exhibition" and distribution of premiums.

An enormous room, at one end of which was a large amphitheatre that mounted in rows of seats to the ceiling, was crowded with a tumultuous audience, while the lower seats, cushioned, held the illustrious strangers and the neighbouring squires. Sometimes, a lord and a baronet came. Down in the middle were two converging rows of chairs facing each other, the seats of torture for the "young gentlemen" who were to entertain the company by reciting various pieces. The remembrance of this honourable suffering—for it was only youths who had distinguished themselves who were selected—makes me even now feel elevatedly uncomfortable. And in the centre, close to the Head of the House, was a round table with a

green baize cloth, on which mystery, hope, joy, terror, and agitation were, so to speak, enamped. For here were the prizes laid out: a gorgeous and dazzling show, and in the centre, the cynosure of our College Museum, a gorgeous inlaid casket, said to have been the private property of Queen Maria Christina, and out of whose countless little drawers and pigeon-holes fluttered innumerable deep blue ribbons, at the end whereof were the large silver medals, struggled for during many weary months; but whose destiny was not yet known. The rest of the table was gaudy with crimson and gold volumes, quarto, octavo, duodecimo—a mass of richness; besides these glories, there were odd volumes of the classics, in quaker-like dress, whose appearance was not so comfortable.

Most delightful of school-days! I think of myself sitting in the sunlight, in a half dream, enraptured with the excitement of that morning. We were all more or less magnificent in our new clothes (one of the most fascinating moments had been the operation of being measured, and of selecting from the tailors' patterns, in which we were allowed uncontrolled latitude), and most of us—that is, of us the big boys—with glistening new hats, in which we took a just pride, and which we would have worn in the House, if we could. Some of our costumes were fanciful, owing to the absence of supervision. I recollect a companion who had to "spout" the Death of Coccoles, in a pea-green shooting-coat with bronze buttons, on which were sportsmen loading guns in alto-relievo. He had also a Scotch plaid waistcoat, of the red and white pattern, and pale slate-coloured trousers. Yet this bold and striking costume excited the deepest admiration among us, and the sporting buttons were later surrounded with eager admirers. Some of us wore dress-coats and white waistcoats, as if we were going to enter upon life as waiters; and there were one or two who were not going home, who wore the established uniform of the place—the blue tails and gilt buttons—and whose adversity—this matter of dress seemed the hardest portion of it—was commiserated in a manly and feeling silence.

I have a bundle of old programmes of these happy festivals before me now. There was a grandeur and solemnity in the announcements that seemed to me the height of majesty. As soon as the illustrious company had entered in procession, and taken their seats, our orchestra began, with, say, the overture to Zampa, led in right concert style by our conductor. Then one of the young gentlemen advanced into the middle and delivered "a prologue," which was applauded, as everything was. Then came Horace, brought by a victim to an amiable and courteous gentleman stranger, who was as nervous as his examinee, who shrank from raising his voice, and who said, "Would you be kind enough to turn to the first ode?" which the other did with surprising alacrity. But things did not always go so smoothly. For

sometimes the youth fell into the hands of a quick and truthful professor from some other college, who tackled the victim at the known pitfalls and ditches.

After this, would come a solemn dirge in the Latin tongue. The Destruction of Jerusalem would be applauded as vehemently as if it were thoroughly understood. Then came a Greek author and more construing, and then the band again. Then came more examining, and finally the Ode, which was the wind up. When that was done, our indefatigable music struck into the Valse d'Amitié, and then came a sudden quiet and devouring restlessness. For now the prize list was to be read out. What a flutter! And as each name was given out, and the happy youth came down from the amphitheatre to have the deep blue ribbon put about his neck, what rounds of terrific applause burst forth! The delight of those moments cannot be described; the triumph and sweet satisfaction of being invested with those decorations I have never experienced since. The rest of the day was a restless dream. When the guests, who were feasted on exquisite viands in the banqueting-hall, came out, we were formed by our drilled sergeant (in full uniform) into battalions, and went through our manœuvres with the precision of the real thing. Then we walked about with our new hats on, as though we, too, were gentlemen just visiting the place.

VI. CHRISTMAS-DAY AT SAXONHURST.

At Saxonhurst it was wisely ordained that no one should go home at Christmas. No distinction was made for peer or peasant. Our community being made up of all nationalities—of Brazilian even, to say nothing of Frenchmen, invariably known as "Frog" this and "Froggy" that—it was felt that the scattering and bringing together of such cosmopolitan elements would consume the whole year.

But which of us would have gone home? Which of us would have given up the galaxy of joys which our Chiefs had artfully accumulated for that special season, in compensation, as it were? The revelry that went on was truly Old English; above all, it was then that the THEATRE ROYAL, SAXONHURST, threw open its doors, and gave a short season of eight or ten nights.

Our stage was a wonderful structure, a miracle of strength and ingenuity, put together with bolts and screws. It had cost some hundreds of pounds, had trap-doors, flies overhead, and every modern appliance in abundance, and the boast of the carpenters who annually fitted it together was, that they had not to drive a single nail in it. "Behind the scenes" was a great jungle of huge posts and joists; it seemed to us a grand work. Indeed, its arrangements were very perfect, having a large set of rollers to which any amount of scenes could be attached, with ropes and levers for winding up. The front was handsome—a cheerful crimson ground, on which were heathen temples, and tragic and comic muses in

abundance, and tritons and garlands, and a great shield in the centre, on which were inscribed the names of Shakespeare, Sheridan, Colman, and Morton, in gold letters—a selection which seems to me a little arbitrary, and scarcely to represent the British Drama. But we had a marvellous wardrobe, and we had a perfect armoury of guns, swords, and pistols. The most delightful of offices was considered that of “green-room deputy.” There were two such officers, who worked under the direction of one of the masters. The mechanical duties which this situation opened up—the lighting of fires, the hammering, tinkering, furbishing, with, it must be added, the avoidance of lessons, made it eagerly sought. The harder and dirtier the work, the more welcome it was. But Christmas had other attractions besides the Drama. The most ennobling part was THE BOXES.

One snowy night, a few days before Christmas Day, I was in the great court, and through the open door saw a huge whitened country waggon and a whitened waggoner. They had made a long journey from the railway station, and carried the first instalment of “the boxes.” Every right-minded parent sent a substantial token of his or her—most usually her—affection, in the shape of a good-sized deal box, heavy, substantial, and taking two strong men to move it. As the great festival drew on, minute directions were written home, couched in strains of painful anxiety; and after the customary “I hope you are quite well, I am very well,” the letter invariably burst into Fortnum and Mason details. “Please let the meat pie be very large. Jack Hodder is being sent one too. I hope Lizzy is quite well also. Please not to forget the *drum of figs*. Also the sovereign in the middle of the plum-cake—*far in, or, Mr. Wilkins will take it.*”*

The public post carried innumerable letters of this pattern, and the great waggon of the snowy night had brought some forty of these chests. From “the customs”—as I may call the great schoolroom, where the great chests were brought in and examined—came telegrams from Mr. Wilkins and his brother officers. Had Gibbs’s box arrived? Gibbs wanted to know. Had Smith’s? Smith had asked in agony. The prevailing terror was always—nor was it unreasonable—that by some casualty the precious chest might go astray, or be detained on the road until the festival was over, and then be recovered with all its contents in a mouldy condition.

Some of us used between whiles to get peeps into this precious storehouse, the savour of which, compounded of all delicious edible odours, seemed to us the most exquisite of perfumes. The extraordinary variety of these articles! There were enormous pies, veal, ham, game,

running over with rich jelly. Every box contained a frosted plum-cake—parents’ ideas might differ as to the size of this delicacy—but a plum-cake of some sort and size was *de rigueur*. Every one had his drum of figs; the very name had a kind of musical and satisfactory sound, and it was known that by some mysterious law application could be made again and again to the “drum,” under circumstances of repletion, without inconvenience or satiety. Boxes of raisins, delicious French confitures, almonds (oranges were a local specialité, and could be always purchased in the House), cream, tarts, and Heaven knows what. Roast ducks and fowls were not encouraged, but they came nevertheless. Do you remember, dear Tom—for your name helps me with these reminiscences—that huge pie, like a pie out of a pantomime—which arrived with other enormous delicacies, was it from Yorkshire? And which seemed to hold all the birds of the air, according to their kind, their individuality all but lost in the strongest jelly ever made?

On the great festival-day itself, the season might be said to commence; on that morning dropped in, generally, some half-dozen “old fellows,” who had travelled long distances to come. All that day there would be meetings in the long galleries, half-doubtful recognitions, with a joyful “Halloo, Jack—this you! How are you?” The stress on the “are” being laid by abundant hand-shaking. The presence of these fellows, in their gay mundane dresses, who were going about enjoying everything, added to the general pleasure.

In the evening of the day the festival began, as just mentioned, with the CHRISTMAS CONCERT. This was the time when OUR BAND would go in and “take their innings,” and cover themselves with glory on the stage of our Theatre. The whole crowd of the rest of us poured up in uproarious spirits, and filled pit and galleries in a moment. According to immemorial custom, the first part was selected from the Messiah—especially its Christmas portions; and even un-musical creatures, who would have held the great Handel himself very cheap as compared with a good game of football, always felt the sweetness and appropriateness of “There were shepherds in the field keeping watch,” &c., which led on to the grand chorus, “For unto us a child is born.” Our choir, very strong in the cathedral treble of boys, would cover itself with glory in this effort. A sweet and round boy’s voice gave out the traditional song of the night—never omitted—an old Christmas carol, which ran to this effect:

Listen to the caroll’d ditty,
Listen to the village chime,
Dear to friendship, joy, and pity,
Comes the merry Christmas time.
The merry, merry time,
The merry, merry time,
Comes the merry Christmas time.

The music of this, ineffably sweet when swelling into the chorus where the whole House

* The Reverend Mr. Wilkins was the officer who “passed” the boxes at the customs, and it need hardly be said that his only object in intercepting the supplies of money was to ensure its not being squandered inconsiderately.

joined, rises on my ears at this moment and dies off in the distance with the "Merry, merry time," still lingering. We had some French, and Brazilian, and Italian, and Spanish of quality and condition, who lived in a sumptuous way, among the Epicureans, and who did what they liked, and I remarked that these foreign gentlemen would invariably distinguish themselves on some instrument, which they played with great ease and grace, and with infinite modesty. I always envied the graceful bows with which these elegant aliens received the applause they worthily earned. Our English performers took their stand on the cornet or flute, and I myself had the honour of inviting mankind to the waltz, on the latter instrument. Upon these occasions, we "soloists" made it a point to appear in true professional costume, white tie and white waistcoat, and full blaze of evening dress. Then there were madrigals, overture to Masaniello by our band, selections from the opera by our choir. The Duke of Kent's Quick Step, when would *that* cease to be popular? A trio for violoncello and piano, a comic vocal trio about some "crows in a cornfield," sure, from its mimetic character, to bring the house down, and the "Valse d'Amitié," ever fair and young.

VII. THEATRE ROYAL, SAXONHURST.

But next night—first of the theatrical season—was a greater festival. Never was there an audience so eager to be pleased and delighted with everything, even with the brilliant vermilion front and crimson curtain, all blazing under the cheerful glare of the footlights. When all are seated and orderly, we begin with a prologue, generally local, and touching on local topics, in a facetious strain; and then the curtain rose on the piece of the night. In the "season" were always produced, a good comedy, a good tragedy, a couple of farces, a melodrama, and a light comedietta. This was a fair allowance for a week or eight days. Some of us had no mean powers. Traditions were among us of two or three "old fellows," grand tragedians, reputed (with much wise manner and shaking of heads) to equal, if not exceed, the late Messrs. Kean and Kemble. These gentlemen were before my day. But I can recall the handsome Charles Gurney, who played Shylock. We had a series of brothers, too, who, as they "came up," were conspicuous for passionate declamation and "jeune premier" style. It was sapiently agreed again and again among us that these youths had but to show themselves on the stage, and they would in a few weeks realise a handsome independence. Richard, Duke of Glo'ster, also exhibited the handsome Gurney with tremendous effect, sneering sardonic and raging, maintaining a splendid combat, and dying excessively game. When he was called before the curtain, the house rose en masse, and remained yelling and shrieking for many minutes—the highest dramatic compliment we could pay. The late Mr. Justice Talfourd's Ion was perhaps the most splendid

of all our successes. A lavish outlay was incurred. Entirely new scenery, dresses, and decorations. The "Interior of the Greek Temple" a set scene, and prodigiously fine. Young Rice, by his pathetic rendering of the hero, *it was said*, drew tears from aged eyes. The effect, too, was enhanced by mournful music and dismal marches of Greeks. But it was remarkable that no plays had a success like Shakespeare's, where there was good broad sterling declamation and fair sentiment—the longer they were, the better too.

In comedy we had yet greater strength. We were great in Speed the Plough; we were great in Guy Mannering, with the gipsies, and the Dominie, and its charming music—"The winds whistle cold"—"O slumber, my darling," and the rest. This was always "got up" in a highly spectacular way—tableaux and costumes of the most effective sort. I recall the unbounded laughter at Dandie Dinmont and the rollicking fellow that performed him, and the capital dance: when all the Scotch peasants came stealing in right and left, with sheepish hang-dog manner (precisely as on the stage), as if they were passing by accident, but in reality to take part in the reel. A hautboy and a clarinet, the latter sustaining the drone, made an admirable imitation of the bagpipe, while a mimetic instrument bearing that appearance was exhibited in front; for we never distinguished Highland music from Lowland music. When the villagers drew off gradually, and left Dandie dancing in the middle by himself, and who then, still dancing, proceeded to throw off waistcoat after waistcoat, now red, now blue, to the number of some twenty. With every waistcoat came a roar of delight; the whole, waistcoats included, was encored rapturously.

The writer hereof was himself held in very fair esteem and popularity as a low comedian. Indeed, during his day, the leading "funny" parts came to him as a matter of course. Solomon Gundy, the English barber who had paid a visit to Dunkirk, was considered a great creation, perhaps the greatest of all his successes. The Comedy of Errors, in which the same comedian played Dromio, and a half foreign gentleman the companion Dromio, was considered a great hit. We were capable of surprising "cramping"—some of us could learn a part in a day. Shakespearean battles, "which begin by a flourish of trumpets" outside, were always immensely enjoyed and fiercely contested. Between the parts, much exhausted by carrying our heavy pasteboard armour and wooden shields, we hurried into the green-room, where there was a huge jug of restoring punch and soothing lemonade.

There was one year when the writer had attained to the dignity of an Epicurean, which was considered a very famous theatrical and musical year. Our body included the most diversified talents, and gentlemen of all countries. We were all tall and accomplished (or were fully satisfied on those heads), and paid

great attention to our dress. But among us were some revolutionary elements, and the fomentor of all was a certain half Mexican, Manuel Nuñez. He was a sort of "red," but a very pusillanimous "red," who, though wearing a great beard and moustache, had been known, when his intrigues were exposed, to go down on his knees, and roar and cry not to be sent home to Mexico. I recollect this crafty emissary working on the younger Epicureans, artfully stirring them up and inflaming their fancied wrongs. It was he and some others who skillfully worked the agitation against the French professor: a most accomplished gentleman and admirable scholar, who superintended our studies. He worked on our national prejudices. Some of us, especially Linton, claimed to be "men of the world," and were sarcastic, though politely so, of course. Linton was about two-and-twenty, had spent years in Paris, was good-looking, and had a perfect wardrobe of fashionably-cut coats, which he wore with corresponding grace. It was noticed that when strangers came, Linton could speak to them with natural easiness of equality, yet without familiarity. We felt oppressed by a sense of awe and reverence, as if in the presence of superior beings. By a mere elevation of the eyebrows and an amused smile, perfectly respectful all the time, Linton could embarrass our French professor to an amazing degree. That gentleman spoke our tongue wonderfully, for a Frenchman, but in presence of Linton—at dinner, say—who seemed to listen with a respectfully amused air until he should finish—he always faltered. Laboriously anxious that he might apprehend his meaning, Linton would, with many excuses, lay the blame of misunderstanding on himself, and beg that he would repeat it. The open laughter all round at these studiously polite passages—we were sadly boorish—would make our poor professor colour and be confused. At last, one day, he lost all patience and temper, and told Linton that he was ungenerous, unmanly, and shabby; that he saw and understood perfectly what he was doing; and that he thought it mean, and did not envy his (Linton's) feelings. We delighted in repeating a passage in this expostulation, which was said to have taken the shape of "onjenny Russe, onmanlee, and shebbe!" And even at dinner, before the master's face, we would tell each other that we were "shebbe." But our hero and man of the world, Linton, had him on the hip. He at once took on himself to call a meeting in the billiard-room on a matter affecting our interest. He addressed us there. We had all seen "the uncalled-for attack" that had been made on him, and what he must call the remarkable temper with which he had received it. He was going to lay the matter before a higher tribunal. That concerned himself; but there was another view affecting us. How long was this to go on? If we allowed ourselves to be treated *any way*, why, well and good. But in the world it was usually observed that people encroached, the more licence they

got. It was purely for us to consider this general aspect of the question.

Linton went himself to wait on the Head of the House, stated his case with great deference and politeness, and gave what he called a plain and unvarnished history of the matter. The Head of the House, a little taken aback, said he would send for the French professor. We could see by the silent and injured looks of our professor at dinner that the matter had been given against him. Linton, with his wonderful air of the world, addressed him with cordiality several times, and even tried to encourage him by bringing on—generously, as we thought—the subject of French politics. But it would not do. "You see," Linton afterwards said, with a wave of his hand, "what the man is! Perhaps it is more his country than himself that is to blame." We were indignant at this behaviour, worked on by the Mexican. Besides, it was given out that our professor was addicted to various "mean French ways" (there was not a particle of truth in this), and that he listened with his ear to keyholes, and spied after every one. Indeed, the Mexican went so far as to say he had "caught him at the end of the gallery on his knees, with his eye to Johnson's door, just before evening." There was a circumstantial particularity about this charge that lifted it above suspicion. The man of the world had prepared a paper, a document. He had thrown together a few ideas. It was "an address" to the head of the House, couched in the most elegant and respectful terms known to the English language, praying for the removal of the professor. It was drawn up in heads, "I, II," &c., and I distinctly remember the wording of one paragraph: "And the gentlemen Epicureans would respectfully suggest the unsuitability of a foreigner whose natural ignorance of English tastes and habits unfit him," &c. There were other complaints as to diet, &c., drawn up with almost legal nicety and roundness, in which, too, a sarcastic allusion was made to "the bringing up of English gentlemen who were accustomed to the ordinary delicacies of the table." The document was written out on a large deed-shaped piece of paper (formed by gumming several sheets of foolscap together), and was beautifully engrossed by the most accomplished penman of our society. At another meeting, called in the billiard-room, it was duly signed. But there were recusants. Our man of the world came out wonderfully on this head, saying, "By all means let Jackson stand alone, if he wished. He (Linton) wished this to be a free act; in that lay all its moral force. There were others who had scruples too; but we had all wished to be in the *same boat, like gentlemen*. I make it a point now that this shall make no difference in our dealings with Jackson." (How noble!) Jackson could not hold out any longer, and signed. A deputation was "told off" to present the memorial, of which I was one. The Head of the House, it was known, would only receive complaints through the proper officer—his deputy and our professor. With a boldness that bordered on

effrontery, I offered to wait on the professor, to ask him would he come down and meet the deputation in the billiard-room? He was writing when I entered—perhaps home to French friends, poor man! and I read his worried stare. "Certainment not," he answered, bitterly. "I shall *not* wait on dem. Let them comb here if they have anything to say to me." I withdrew rather abashed, and reported my reception. "Certainly," said Linton, with an easy smile. "Let us gratify him in all reasonable matters." And taking up the roll, tied neatly, he led the way to the professor's room. The poor Frenchman, still writing, looked round, scared, I think, as the "deputation" advanced: most members of the deputation rather avoiding good front places. But Linton stood forward calmly, and made a short speech. We had ventured to embody, he said, a few of our complaints in this document, and he hoped we might ask him to take the trouble to lay it before the proper authority. (How fine it was to have this command of words!) With a profound, almost sweet, bow, the roll was placed in the professor's hand (in which he was described as "a foreigner"), and we withdrew.

These demands created a storm in the House. For a time we heard there was a question as to whether we should withdraw our signatures or retire from the college. But afterwards I learned that it had caused intense amusement, and many a hearty laugh.

The plays given by the "Gentlemen Epicureans" were always on the last nights of the season, and were looked forward to eagerly. The acting was better, we being of more advanced age; and the expenditure more lavish, we having plenty of money. Looking through our play-bills, I find that the plays selected were mostly of a special class—where there was a fine field for brigands, and robbers, and crowds. This was owing to the foreign element in our constituency, who were necessarily driven into pantomime. Delightful to me, and very far back too, seems *THE MILLER AND HIS MEN*, where there were plenty of "men" (foreigners) who carried white sacks, and where there was a good deal of firing, the smoke of which covered many faults, and where there was a white mill, which went round, and was blown up at the end. A year or two later came *THE CASTLE OF ANDALUSIA*, which exhausted our richest Spanish dresses, and had its firing too, and brigands, and a cave also; the brave Frenchmen came out splendidly here, singing Dr. Arne's music excellently, and such of them as were mere mute brigands making natural comedy and melodrama out of their walk and eyes. Nor must I pass by the inimitable little Italian, who, with an imperfect knowledge of our tongue, learned the whole of the facetious Pedrillo's part in a style that quite shamed us natives; for, besides being "letter-perfect," he threw such infinite gusto and grimace into the comic man-servant as to receive all the honours of the night. A Master I Have was redemanded twice, with rapture.

Our own particular Epicurean year was to be

marked with signal success. The play we selected was *THE IRON CHEST* (we had a tremendous Sir Edward Mortimer), in which was Storrace's good music, and again, plenty of robbers. No one there had seen or heard of Box and Cox; and we determined to bring that popular farce out. Linton, the man of the world, was Cox; the writer, still a low comedian of reputation, was Box. It was a success, long after remembered and talked of—perhaps because of the practicable fireplace, admirably contrived, on which the famous chop and bit of bacon were cooked. The names of both plays were kept dark, and there was much public speculation as to what had been selected. I recall a fresh, crisp, frosty night, the night before our performance, when a daring band of us descended by a ladder from our window, into the broad open playground; all the doors had been locked and made fast, so there was no other way of accomplishing our dark deed. There were two or three of us, and though the process we chose was inconvenient, we revelled in it. We had a pot of paste and some large posters—struck off at a neighbouring town—and these we affixed to every blank wall, "ball alley," and convenient coigne of vantage. Early next morning, when the mob came rushing out—as it always did, for no apparent reason—to its accustomed sports, you may be sure we were all at our windows to see the effect. There were crowds gathered about the posters, reading with amazement and delight the following astounding bill of fare:

THEATRE ROYAL, SAXONHURST.

GREAT ATTRACTION!

For One Night only!!

This Evening will be performed the Romantic
Drama of

THE IRON CHEST.

Characters by Messrs. Smith, Jones, Robinson,
Dumoulin, Nuñez, Sebastiano, and Toussaint.

To conclude with

BOX AND COX.

Box	Mr. FitzCarter.
Cox	Mr. Linton.

AN ARTIFICIAL OCEAN.

As the steamer from Folkestone to Boulogne nears the chalky outline of the French coast, the traveller cannot well fail to notice a strange craggy sharp-pointed looking affair, brown in hue, and unlike anything he is familiar with—except an iceberg, as represented in a travelling panorama, supposing the ice to have been touched over with red ochre. Appealing to the captain, or the through railway guard, the said traveller will be informed "it is the new aquarium adjoining the Etablissement des Bains de Mer."

The exterior of this monster aquarium is by no means pleasing to the eye, neither did it at all impress the visitor who pens these notes, on being entered. We gazed into sundry pits; some had water in them; from others the tide had

gone out, and the few living things which were there at the ebb, like "Barkis," had gone out with it. A few flabby shore-crabs, some winkles and pectens gasping for air and water, a sea-urchin or two, their jackets of lime and membrane so dry that their spines and suckers were fixtures like themselves, several dead and dying fish—these made up the sum total of the treasures from the deep. It seemed a chaos of pits, holes, and indescribable openings. There were legions of tile pipes which appeared to have no definite direction, leading to every place and from every place, crossing and re-crossing until the eye failed to take in anything but an inexplicable confusion of holes and lines of rope. It suggested the idea of its being the work of beavers and musk rats, if one could have imagined them equal to making draining-pipes and heaping up tons of concrete. In this state of baffled hope a Frenchman beckoned the visitor to follow him, and shook his head at all he had been contemplating. We crossed several deep pits on narrow planks, threaded our way past a pile of limey-looking rocks, down over a slanting kind of place where water was dropping from a stream above, that tumbled into a chasm and disappeared, and, after winding along a damp intricate labyrinth-like passage, we came suddenly into an immense cavern. The cavern is, at a rough guess, about sixty feet long and not quite so wide. The centre is supported on massive pillars made to resemble stalactites, while through the arched and gloomy roof light steals in mysteriously.

Real as the cave looks, still much more strongly is the idea of being really under the sea brought home to one when along the sides and fronting the entrance are veritably, and not metaphorically, a number of small seas; cavern-like openings are skillfully made in the sides of the vault, the fronts of which are of glass, let into the irregularities of the concrete; the interiors of these holes are of all shapes, and are hollowed into quaint dens and lurking-places for sea-fish to skulk and hide in; only a few of them as yet are completed, but in those that are filled with sea-water the light is so artfully and cleverly admitted, that one can see no end to the space. It is like gazing into an illimitable extent of water—a sea, looked up through, instead of down into.

The artist by whom this clever production has been originated, is M. Edouard Bélencourt, and under his clever and artistic management it is rapidly growing towards completion. Report whispers that this same artist is to be commissioned to erect another monster aquarium for the coming Paris Exhibition. There is not a question as to this aquarium being, at present, the largest in the world; and it is not too much to say in praise of our neighbours on the other side of the Channel, that they will confer a benefit on the world, if the managers of these little oceans exemplify the art of pisciculture, which, as an art bearing directly on the question of supplying food at a cheap rate for the poor, stands second to none.

What fish do in the deep sea, we none of us know; how they spawn, when they spawn, where they spawn, or what becomes of the baby fishes when they launch from the egg into the world, are, with a few exceptions, mysteries to us. Here, however, a chance offers itself of playing the spy upon the habits of deep-sea fish. Why should they not spawn in these tanks? Oysters, too, may spat, for aught we can tell, in such an aquarium.

All honour to the artist and to the good people of Boulogne for setting us a good example. It is very beautiful, even in its unfinished condition; but when lichens, mosses, ferns, and plants that love the damp and shade, shall clothe with their fronds of green and gold the concrete overspreading the hollow bricks of which the substructure is composed, and when seaweeds (as they are misnamed) shall wave to and fro in the miniature seas on every side, it will be a most striking and an unparalleled combination of nature and art.

A GOOD HACK.

THE young man from the country, who for the first time penetrates from the whirl of Piccadilly to the shady silence of May-fair, will notice at the corner of a street a signboard in a more elaborate style of art than is common on modern public-houses—a sprightly youth, in the costume of the "pampered menial" of the time of George the Second, with a pole in his hand, stepping away at the rate of some six miles an hour.

The sign represents an ornamental luxury that died with the last famous or infamous Duke of Queensberry—the running footman—a class of servant without some half-dozen of which, early in the eighteenth century, no great house was complete. They ran before and alongside the fat Flemish mares of the period and warned the innkeeper of the coming guests, or with their long staves helped the caravan-like coach out of the numerous sloughs on the northern or western high road.

Good roads and post-horses increased the coaching-pace from six miles to ten miles, and killed the trade of running footmen: leaving nothing but the costume and the long staff turned into a cane for the gorgeous creatures who still hang behind court chariots or lord mayors' coaches, and do ornamental duty in the vestibules of great houses.

With the decline of the running footman, and from the same cause—the improvement of high-ways and public carriages—began the decay of the famous British hackney, or roadster.

We may be sure that the roads were very bad, and that travelling on wheels was very expensive, when Alexander Pope rode to Oxford through Windsor Forest, on a horse borrowed from the Earl of Burlington, and met on his way the bookseller, Bernhard Lintot, also riding a nag borrowed of his publisher, "which he had of Mr. Oldnixon for a debt."

These roadside hacks had qualities not found in these days of Macadam and railroads, because not wanted. They were for the most part between fourteen and fifteen hands high. A tall horse is neither handy to mount nor likely to last through a long day. They were strong, for they had to carry, over and above the horseman with his large cloak and jack-boots, a heavy saddle with holsters, pistols, and saddle-bags. They were tolerably swift, for the rider might have to owe his safety to his pace. They had good shoulders and plenty before the pommel, capital legs and feet; they were hardy enough in constitution to bear rough weather, indifferent stables, and coarse fodder. They were required to carry their riders, not for an hour or two now and then, for exercise or fashion's sake, but for long days, day after day, and that with an easy elastic walk, trot, or canter. According to a rule as old as time, the demand created the supply, and men of fortune were always willing to buy at long prices a handsome, sure-footed, easy-going, enduring hackney, while less fortunate travellers put up with every degree of utility with more or less of comfort and beauty, because they had no other way of journeying.

After half a century of stage-coaches had tempted most travellers on to wheels, came railroads and destroyed the roadside inns, where the horseman used to find a warm welcome after a long hard day. On the great north road, where twenty years ago the crack of the postilion's whip and the blast of the guard's horn, the rattling of hoofs and the jingling of pole-chains, resounded night and day, you cannot now make sure of a bed, a decent meal, or a feed of corn. As for ostlers, the race is extinct; if you choose to ride or drive, you must bring your groom, or groom your horse yourself.

This decay of inns renders impossible feats performed by men of our own time, though of the last generation. Old Dick Tattersall used to have a relay of hacks on the road between London and Grantham; used to mount, after a day's work of auction at the extinct Corner, ride down one hundred and eight miles before morning, hunt the next day with the Belvoir hounds, and return by the same means to his duties. Sir Tatton Sykes, of Sledmere, the last of the real squires, who was satisfied to spend a large income at home on hospitality, field sports, agriculture, and breeding Leinster sheep and horses to win the Derby, without troubling either the world of politics or the world of fashion, had a way of travelling (with as little baggage as Sir Charles Napier) to Epsom to see the Derby run, or to an equal distance to ride a race, that would now be impossible. Wherever he slept the first night, he borrowed next morning a clean shirt from the landlord, and left his own to be washed ready for his return. He repeated the operation at each resting-place on the road, returning by instalments each borrowed garment until he arrived back at Sledmere in his own shirt.

A small valise carried the satin breeches and silk stockings that replaced his leathers and long boots in the evening. The operation was ingenious, primitive, and clean; but in 1866 the landlords with frilled shirts have followed the way of satin breeches, and are known no more.

Enduring hacks of the old sort are now only to be found in the hands of active farmers, who look over hundreds of acres before breakfast, and in the hands of country surgeons. They are generally satisfied with anything useful that will do their day's work—very different from the time when a good roadster hackney was worth as much as, and was more carefully chosen than, the modern brougham horse.

In Australia you may find horses of English breed that will travel their three hundred miles in five days, and therein lies their principal merit; for well-broken easy-going roadsters are rare in that rapid, make-haste-to-be-rich country. The Australian horse is an instrument of business, not an instrument of pleasure.

Very different was England some thirty years ago, when the tour on horseback was to be enjoyed in perfection by the horseman whose years, health, and spirits, could defy the damp days, muddy roads, dark nights, and uncertain inns, for the sake of independence, adventure, and the abstract pleasure there is in riding a good horse. "The gentleman was known by his horse." He was not tied by a mile or two, or an hour or two, and, well mounted, was not afraid of getting a little wrong in trying a short cut, or investigating a promising scene, a green range of hills or ancient manor, buried in a park of ancestral oaks. Country folk were wonderfully kind and cheery to such a traveller; stout farmers returning from market were hospitably pressing (in the northern counties); and squires, once assured the stranger was only travelling for pleasure—not unfrequently the adventure of Squire Western on his road to London was repeated, a chance run with hounds and a dinner with a stranger to follow—were wonderfully kind. All through the counties where, at war prices, moorland had been enclosed, there were long slips of greensward on either side of the highway, inviting a canter in the morning, and affording pleasant walking ground for the last tired mile or two. Then there were many delightful short cuts through bridle-roads across fords too deep for wheels, and — by sufferance of lodge-keepers, open to the blandishments of a smile, a pleasant word, and a shilling — through parks rich in turf, water, woodland, game, and deer. Oh, those were delightful days, when, young and full of life and hope and romance, with a good horse, a sufficiently well-filled purse, and more than one friend on the round, we set out, not afraid of rheumatism, to travel some two or three hundred miles with a definite point to reach, but no particular day or hour or route! In those days—it was before these grisly whiskers of ours had made their appearance, in spite of industrious shaving—the

roadside inns, now desolate, or turned into granaries, boarding-schools, lunatic asylums, had been brought to perfection (for bachelors) by constant traffic. If you were not able to hit a great hotel, there were small public-houses patronised by graziers, with "accommodation for man and beast" sufficient. There were adventures, too—not highwaymen, they had gone out with the preceding generation—pleasant acquaintances were made, and unsuspected charms in the way of sport and scenery were discovered. But there were also, it must be admitted, drawbacks which few men over thirty would willingly encounter without some real object. Long rides at a footpace on dark dirty nights, on a tired lame horse; inns full of drovers and butchers attending a fair; no stable-room; your saddle, or perhaps your horse, borrowed in the morning; and an attack of ague, fever, or rheumatism, as the reward of your enterprise and preference for a horse-ride to seats in the Tally-ho or Tanti-vy.

Boswell, writing just a hundred years ago to his friend Temple, of a journey to and from Glasgow, says: "I shall chaise it all the way—thanks to the man who first invented the comfortable method of journeying! Had it not been for that, I dare say both you and I would have circumscribed our travels within a very few miles. For my own part, I think to dress myself in a great-coat and boots, and get astride a horse's back, and be jolted through mire, perhaps through wind and rain, is a punishment too severe for all the offences I can charge myself with."

For these reasons it would be a waste of space to say more about the gentleman's roadster, an animal as extinct as a four-horse coachman. The cover hack is the nearest representative of the roadster hack of our grandfathers; but the spread of macadamising principles, the consequent inclination to use wheels, and the extension of railroads, have had their effect on the numbers of that once indispensable part of a hunting-stud. At one of the crack meets in the Pasture counties at the present day, you do not see one-tenth of the number of genuine cover hacks that came rattling from all points of the compass thirty years ago, when Sir Charles Knightley and Sir Tatton Sykes were the first-light men of their respective counties. Deduct those who come in one of the many varieties of cart, phaeton, wagonette, drag, and brougham—those who make a hunter do hack's work at all near meets—those who use a nondescript general-utility animal, as familiar with a collar as a saddle—those who make their London luxury, the Park hack, do duty in the country (as one of the oldest and most famous masters of the Quorn often did), and the residuum of real cover hacks will be found very small.

A perfect cover hack should be able to walk nearly five miles (towards home), trot at least twelve miles, and gallop twenty miles, within the hour, with ease to himself and comfort to his rider. But there are famous hacks that only canter and

gallop, and one of the best and handsomest we ever knew could walk five miles and trot seventeen miles an hour (like oil); but galloped like a camel, rolling and labouring every yard. She was bred between a Welsh pony and a thoroughbred horse.

Pace is essential, because those who ride cover hacks are sure to be late and in a hurry; but easy elastic action, only to be found in well-shaped well-bred animals, is equally essential, because you desire to arrive as fresh as possible after your bustle to cover-side, and above all to enjoy the change from a tired hunter to a fresh hack, and *glide*, as it were, towards home.

A perfect cover hack can jump pretty well, especially stiff timber, creep through cramped places, and lead over impossible places, and then he is quite equal to a dog with harriers or to carry your eldest hope to foxhounds.

The luxury of the age in horseflesh is the Park hack, ridden daily for pleasure only, capable, if perfect, of doing a long day's journey well; but that is not essential, as he is seldom required to go more than five or six hours at a moderate pace. The true Park hack must be handsome in a picturesque point of view, which is quite different from the handsomeness of a hunter—as different as the ideal form of Mars and Apollo—easy in every motion and pace, full of courage, yet with the sweetest temper, silky, elastic, graceful. Mares are admitted among perfect hacks, and are often more beautiful, though less to be depended on, than geldings. The latter are, all other things being equal, preferred.

The statesman, the great lawyer, the surgeon of European reputation, the capitalist on whose signature miles of railroads and acres of docks all over the world are constructed—the journalist, whose brains are to him both capital and power—all the hard workers whose means permit and tastes allow—all the army of pleasure-seekers who work hard at amusement—all the gatherers and distributors of wealth may find in a perfect Park hack a luxury, a rest, a healthy excitement, a pleasant fatigue, a medium for grave or serious converse, for light lively gossip, for making love, for making friends, for patching up quarrels, for selling bargains, or arranging political combinations, which the old-fashioned squire, the provincial manufacturer, and the turf man who never rides, and who looks on horses as mere machines for betting on, cannot understand, and therefore despise. A fine form and elegant manners are indispensable in the Park hack. A hunter may have a plain head and a rat tail, may be a stumbling slug on the road, or a hard puller in the field, but if he fence brilliantly, and can gallop, and live through a first-class run in a first-class country, he will command a long price, because all minor faults are forgiven in consideration of his perfection in his trade.

The following sketch of the Park hack is from the pen of one of the most fashionable dealers and finest horsemen of Piccadilly:—The Park hack should have, with perfection of graceful

form, graceful action, an exquisite mouth, and perfect manners. He must be intelligent; and amongst horses, senseless brutes are legion, for without intelligence, even with fine form and action, he never can be pleasant to ride. Thorough-bred is to be preferred; and if not quite, as nearly thorough-bred as possible, of any colour except mealy or foul marked. White marks often much improve, sometimes quite disfigure a horse. The height may be usually taken at from fourteen hands to fifteen hands two inches; but tall horsemen and women look best on tall horses. That most thorough-bred hack, Fire King, purchased for the Emperor of the French, at the Agricultural Hall, in May last, was full fifteen hands three inches.

The head should be of the finest Arab type. The neck well arched but not too long. The shoulders, light at the points, long, and grown well into the back. The loins should be accurately arched and the quarters level and nicely rounded, not drooping toward the tail (like many capital hunters, famous race-horses, and useful road hacks). The mane and tail should be full, straight, without the least suspicion of a curl, and every hair as soft as silk, four clean well-shaped, well-placed legs, the fetlocks rather longer than would be chosen for a hunter, and from such a form action may be confidently expected, pleasant to the rider, and a pleasure for even the commonest observer to follow.

The walk of a Park hack should be perfection—fast, springy; the legs moving apparently independently of the body without apparent exertion, with all certainty of machinery, the head carried in its right place, the neck bent and the tail displaying a full flag gracefully keeping time with the footfalls. From the walk he should be able to bound into any pace, in perfectly balanced action, that the rider may require.

Those who remember the warrior Marquis of Anglesea on his Pearl, will be able to realise this sketch. But a survey of Rotten-row in the season will always present some pictures of life and motion, fire, courage, and docility to which no painter could do perfect justice.

Perfection can only be obtained by fortunate and wealthy purchasers who know how to choose, or who allow those who do know to choose for them. Such horses have been sold at four hundred and even five hundred guineas. The ordinary price of a Park hack may range from eighty guineas to two hundred pounds.

Although more beautiful riding-horses may be seen in Hyde Park than in any other city in the world, there are also more discreditable brutes to be seen there than elsewhere. Besides screws of all kinds, the well-worn cidevants of riding-schools, immortalised by John Leech, and the many useful animals whose owners neither deserve nor desire observation, there are all the eccentricities of a city of three millions of inhabitants. Everything odd in colour, in shape, and in training; huge men on ponies bending under their weight; little men on giraffes. The perfect horseman on the perfect hack, is jostled by

the lout with no qualification but the pluck of ignorance, on a star-gazing wretch that has only received the rudiments of a polite education.

"There should," observes the correspondent already quoted, "be as much etiquette in riding in Rotten Row as in the ball-room of a palace. That, however, is a part of national education in which there is much room for improvement."

But the Londoners are not the only comic or dangerous riders. Sometimes, country gentlemen bring their stale snaffle-bridle hunters, lumbering along terribly out of place; others indulge themselves in riding cross-made animals of their own breeding, with no other merit. The latest and most remarkable exhibition of wild horsemanship was not performed by an ambitious clerk, or an amateur dealer intent on showing off a half-broken colt, but by a young gentleman of fashion, the descendant of a long line of hunting men, famous in a famous hunting county. The fact is, as one of the greatest masters of hounds and finest horseman lately remarked, "In the field a hard fellow who can stick on, and does not care for falls, will often hold a place in the first flight; but for the Park the horse should be perfectly broken, and the rider should understand those principles of horsemanship which, in these fast days, are too much neglected in England. The well-broken Park horse walks, trots and canters, and changes his leg in cantering on slight but certain indications of hand and leg. Too many hold their reins like a bunch of tapes, and only use their legs to spur."

As to ladies' horses, a perfect Park hack is a lady's horse, with the exception that a man does not look amiss subduing a fiery animal, and by degrees bringing him down to obedience. To use a horsey term, a good horseman may enter the Park with a fine-tempered horse, "a little above himself"—not vicious. The rider with fine hands endangers no one, if his fresh high-couraged horse have a fine mouth; while the dullest brute with a leather mouth may be at times most dangerous. Above all things, in choosing a Park hack avoid a nervous animal, which, like an armed coward, is one of the most uncertain of creatures, and, when mad with fright, loses even the instinct of self-preservation. For the same reason, a horse that shies from timidity or defective eyesight (many horses shy from high spirit when not sufficiently exercised) is as much to be avoided as a stumbler. In country riding, a horse has room to shy. On the other hand, it is magnificent to see how sometimes a high-couraged horse will positively enjoy and display himself at the sound of shouts, hurrahs, musketry, or military music. In the life of Sir Fowell Buxton, it is mentioned that his favourite horse, John Bull, stood, in a grand attitude, when surrounded by a mob who were hooting and hissing the Prince Regent, excited but motionless, like a fine statue. The Prince was so much delighted with the horse's be-

haviour, that he sent to purchase him, but "John Bull was not to be sold."

A word about the weight-carrying cobs, which in perfection are as scarce as any class it is possible to name. Plenty of cart-bred brutes, with thick hairy legs, heavy shoulders, and round quarters, are to be found in the Park, bestridden by stout gentlemen, whose ignorance, it may be presumed, gives them courage; plenty, too, that go safely in very vulgar form, whose chief merit is their docile stupidity. But the ideal cob to carry a millionnaire, is a stout body, short strong flat legs, with fine sloping shoulders and a thorough-bred head and neck. This cob must walk admirably with reins on his neck, nodding his head, and must pace from Hyde Park to the Bank if needed without slipping, sliding, or paying the slightest attention to the most unexpected sights or sounds. A very light mouth is, perhaps, not essential, as your welter-weight generally hangs more or less on the bridle. He must trot or canter well—trot for choice—smoothly, and if fast, all the better; but a Park cob need not be fast, if true in his paces. If, then, up to seventeen stone or upwards, of a good colour (a lady may ride a piebald or a cream, but a banker cannot), with suitable manners, he is worth from one hundred to three hundred guineas, according to merit and the pocket of the customer.

A young hack, however good, is easily spoiled by a careless rider, just as ladies' horses are often spoiled for want of regular exercise. Half the accidents that take place occur from this cause. Good stud-grooms do not consult my lady, but give Sultan or Fatima, full of blood and full of corn, a full hour's exercise in the morning early before the side-saddle is called for.

"So you have got the young Kingston horse back again?"

"Why, you see, sir, the gentleman that gave me three hundred for him took him down into the country, and rode him about all the summer with one hand and a snaffle bridle, so I have to break him over again!"

Park riders, a last word. Don't forget your hands!

MOLLY THE TRAMP.

VERY late on a dark wet night in June, two persons entered together a pawnbroker's shop in Dublin. One was a low-sized countryman, with a fox-like face, quick eyes, hanging brows, an unscrupulous mouth, a narrow forehead, and a large ear set so amongst his bristling hair, that it had the appearance of being habitually cocked. He was clad in two huge coats of grey frieze, and wore a consciousness of responsibility. He looked hard at the other customer entering with him, who shrank away and cowered into a corner by the counter. The pawnbroker, coming from a little room behind the shop, directed his attention to

the countryman at once, with only a glance at the timid figure in the background.

The man in frieze was a west-country drover, who had arrived from the mountains only a few hours before with a drove of sheep for market. He found himself unexpectedly in need of money until next day, when his stock would be sold. He pulled off the outer of his two coats, and flung it on the counter.

The pawnbroker examined the coat, and a discussion arose as to the amount of money to be advanced upon it. It was thrown from one to the other, shaken out, folded up, and finally tossed down on the counter, while the pawnbroker, himself in a passion, almost dragged his bullying customer into his little room behind, for the purpose of showing him articles of equal value, for which he had advanced smaller sums than that which he now offered on the coat. The other customer, a woman, was left standing in the shop alone.

She was a woful specimen of womanhood: a figure whose outlines were lost in miserable wrappings of rags, a dirty trailing gown, and a tattered shawl. Her bonnet, fit for a gutter, had two or three grimy red roses flaunting dismally under the brim. Her skin was dark, either by nature or from want of care and cleanliness. She was quite young, though one could hardly know it, looking on her thin sallow face, deadened eyes, and colourless lips.

She had in her hand what can only be described as a rag. A wobegone look had fallen over her face when the two men left her unnoticed: a look which was crossed now and then by one of impatience, which burned up and went out of her sallow face again, leaving the stolid weariness to come back. Of what use was it for her to be angry who only existed in the world upon sufferance?

Presently the pawnbroker comes bustling back to the shop to fetch something, takes in her wretchedness with a keen eye, and roughly asks her business. She offers him her rag, calling it a mantle. It is perfectly worthless, and he is out of temper. He flings it back to her with an oath, and returns to his more important customer.

The tall figure shakes as if blows had come down upon it, the light of eagerness fades out of the eyes, the hands mechanically fold up the rejected garment. This is no new scene that has come upon her; it is part of the daily routine of her life. Harsh words, repulsion, are as familiar to her as the taste of bread and milk to a child who has never suffered hunger. She accepts the award of her patience with the meekness of habitual dejection, but behind it there is something stirring which is not habitual; something which makes the cowed spirit rise up again, which awakens persistence out of the passiveness of despair. She turns again from the shop door, towards which she had set her face, and takes her stand by the counter once more. She will wait to have another word with the pawnbroker.

Now, the root of this girl's purpose was holy, and yet her next act was the drop of evil that overflowed the cup of her misery, and turned trouble into sin.

She was so weary, that the earth seemed to drag her failing limbs towards it. Her eyes were fixed on the opposite wall, looking at a filmy picture present to them—a dying man, struggling with his death, alone in darkness. She heard not the shouts and curses in the street outside, nor the bargaining of the two men in the inner room, but a voice calling "Drink! drink!" She heard the horrible, greedy cry, "Whisky!" gurgling in a dying throat. Her sunken eyes started forward, her hands wrought with one another. She gazed all around the shop. No one near her, no one minding her; and the coat still lying on the counter.

For one moment she was raised to the dignity of resisting temptation. Only one moment; need was too great, habit too strong, misery too deep. The coat was snatched, and the girl vanished.

The two men returned only about a minute too late, and rushed into the street crying "Stop thief!" The cry was echoed and tossed from lip to lip in the dirty lanes and alleys. Drunken men reeled out of taverns and caught it, wretched children yelled it along the gutter. It clamoured in the hunted creature's ears as she strained her weak limbs along the pavement, or huddled herself into some corner to let the pursuers go by. "It is the last time, the last time!" she muttered. So it was, the last sin of many; but not to go unpunished.

The cry had long ceased, and the chase had been abandoned, when the dark figure crept in at a miserable doorway, and up a dirty, crazy flight of stairs. She had no coat in her hands now, but some money, and a small bottle. She looked from right to left with scared eyes, and then entered a squalid room where the dawn was stealing wanly through a broken skylight in the roof. The walls were perfectly bare; there was no sign of food, furniture, nor clothing. The girl looked eagerly towards a corner where the figure of a man lay stretched upon straw. She went forward, listening and gazing intently, and dropped on her knees beside the figure.

"Here it is," she said, in a voice of fright that matched her face; "here is the whisky. I could not get it any sooner."

There was no answer by sound or movement.

"Father!" she shrieked, with a wild sob. She lifted an awful-looking hand from the straw, and dropped it again. The figure on the pallet was a corpse. The cries that had rung through the room when she left it were still for ever.

She drew a covering over the body, looked round the bare walls of the den, and sat down on the floor with a passive despair in her white face. Her foot touched the bottle of spirits. She snatched it up and half emptied it at a draught, stretched herself on the straw at the feet of the corpse, and soon fell into a state of unconsciousness that answered with her for peace.

This is the history of Molly's crime. It is quite useless for the purposes of this story to go back any further into her past. It is not easy to get at the true antecedents of such creatures. One, would have told you that Molly Cashel was a charwoman; another, that she was a ballad-singer; another, that she was a street-vagrant; another, that she was a thief. Each account would have been true, for she had been all of these things in turns. She had been dragged through every kind of misery from her wretched motherless childhood until now, her nineteenth year. She had been ill-treated and made a slave of by a brutal step-father—the man whose last desire she had sinned to strive to satisfy. A worn-out, battered creature, who had never had any youth, who had never been taught, who had been driven on all her life by the instincts and necessities of the present moment.

It was only six o'clock, but the June sun was shining hotly down into the filthy alleys, glistening on the mud made by the rain of the night before, and burning on the broken window-panes crusted with dirt and stuffed with rags; and the Rooneys were up already, and fighting as usual. The Rooneys were a family of wandering mountebanks, who lodged at present in the room under that in which Molly Cashel and her father's corpse were lying. This den was a singular contrast to the one above it—not that there was a whit more comfort to be seen within it; but whereas the one was bare, and full of the silence of death, the other was overflowing with all kinds of litter, and echoing with the quarrelsome shouting of noisy voices. The remains of a coarse breakfast lay about a dirty bench at one side of the room, and heaps of frippery rags mingled with tinsel gewgaws were scattered about in all directions on the floor. The Rooney mother, a stout broad-faced vixenish-looking woman, was engaged in pasting daubs of gold paper all over a very dirty white muslin short frock—part of the costume usually worn by Miss Matilda Rooney when dancing the sailor's hornpipe. The Rooney father, who, when he was not in a passion, had a general air of humorous rowdiness, was adorned by nature with a squint, and by accident with a broken nose, which last was fiery in colour. He was now occupying himself (with one arm in one sleeve of a ragged coat) by knocking the ashes out of his pipe and his knuckles on the heads of his two sons, who were unwillingly practising somersaults in one corner, and responding to the paternal correction by loud growls of remonstrance. Miss Matilda Rooney, a dwarf of sixteen years who looked about ten, was busied in twisting battered artificial flowers together, for the adornment of her own elf-locks of rusty red and the enhancement of the beauty of the paternal squint, which she inherited in full perfection. As she worked, she beguiled her task by stray words of impudence flung at her father and mother, and frowns

and shakings of her fist at a squalling baby who was lying kicking on his back, neglected, on the floor.

The Rooney family was about to divide itself and go upon two separate pedestrian excursions into different parts of the country, to startle simple villagers and inhabitants of roadside cottages with the display of its wonderful accomplishments. The Rooney sons were going to tumble southwards in their tights and spangles; the Rooney father, mother, daughter, and baby, were going to dance, scrape, and jingle their way westward with pipe, fiddle, and tambourine.

The Rooney family was making so much noise with its preparations, that a timid knock was repeated thrice outside, and no one in the room heard it. At last the door was driven open, and a white face was pushed in.

"Molly!" cried the Rooney mother, and there was a general hush—so scaring, for the moment, was the wild white face at the door.

"Arrah, thin, it's you that looks 'fresh and rosy after yer mornin' walk!" cried the Rooney father, with a laugh at his own wit.

"Father's dead!" said Molly, her dark hopeless eyes wandering away from the people in the room up the blank walls in a vacant search for sympathy.

"Dead!" came from all in a chorus, and then from one:

"Rest his sowl!"

From another:

"He'll give ye no more black eyes!"

And again:

"Ye'll be breakin' yer heart afther him!"

"He's made a lucky flittin'!" said Tim Rooney, the father. "He'd ha' been thrown out for rint to-morrow. Have ye any money?"

"I have money," said Molly, unclosing her hand and showing silver.

"Where did ye get it?" cried Mother Rooney, eyeing it greedily. "Ah, ye jail-bird! Ye've been thievin' again, have ye? Ye'll be goin' abroad some o' these days, my darlin'. Why don't ye take afther poor honest folks like uz, and get yer livin' decent, ye divil ye!"

"I want to do it," cried Molly, imploringly, "but they won't let me. None of them will let me. The days keep coming, one after another, and force me into badness. Oh, if you would take me out of the town with you, Mrs. Rooney, I'll give you this money, and I'll thramp the country like the best! Couldn't I carry the baby for ye, Mrs. Rooney?" cried Molly, wringing her hands.

Mother Rooney told her to get out of that for a slut, and sent her away to bury her father; but before daylight next morning the Rooney family had decided that Molly would be an acquisition to the tramping expedition. The neglected baby that kicked on the floor had grown since the last excursion, and Mother Rooney had found difficulty even then in managing both it and her fiddle. Molly could sing ballads and carry the baby. So, the

pauper's funeral being over, Molly was bidden to enter on her new profession of tramp.

She locked up the door and surrendered the key to the landlord. The girl's leaden heart was a little less leaden when she had done this. In that room she had starved, sinned, mourned, and despaired. She fetched the neglected baby out of the Rooney Bedlam below, and sat with it in a high corner landing of the rickety staircase. It would be hard to analyse the chaos of poor Molly's brain. Doubtless there was a heavy retrospection going on behind those black eyes wide open in the darkness, listening to a "death-watch" ticking at her ear; for Molly in her wanderings had got stray glimpses of religion—just enough to let her know that her life was all wrong, and that there was a better life to be attained somewhere, but never by her. There was expectation, too, in those wide-open eyes; but it was very vague and dull. That a change, no matter what, was at hand, was Molly's chief idea. She would get away out of the filthy streets and lanes, to which she was not dainty enough to object because of their filthiness, but because within their boundaries every man's hand was against her. To what manner of region she was going, she did not know nor care. She had never been out of the town in her life, and the open country was a sealed book to her. Probably she should get enough to eat, of some kind; she should not have to steal—perhaps not even to beg, where there would be so many more nimble-tongued to do it. Hard usage and fatigue she was inured to; any change must be for the better. She got a crust of bread from the Rooneys that night, and leave to stretch herself behind their door till morning.

By dawn they were off on the tramp, Molly carrying the baby, her pocket stuffed with dirty ballads; Mother Rooney with her fiddle; Father Rooney with his pipes and some bag-gage; Matilda with her tambourine, and her dancing-dress covered with a shawl, the point of which dragged in the mud and dabbled on the young lady's heels as she went along. The drizzling rain kept on, and for the first two or three days, things were wretched. The country was sheeted in mist, and cottagers kept their doors shut. The towns they passed through were uninteresting and inhospitable. A magnificent show on wheels and a German band were travelling the same route, arriving in every place of note just in time to occupy all the public attention and leave hardly a stray gape of curiosity for the miserable Rooneys. So they left the route they had intended to follow, and struck out on the bog and mountain country.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Through the drizzling summer day and far into the drizzling summer night, four weary dreary figures plodding on, and never the sign of a dwelling in sight since the last unfriendly village had been left miles behind. Hitherto they had always found a lodging in the shelter of some town, but to-night there was nothing for it but to creep into

the shadow of an old ruined chapel and make their beds among the stones and grass.

All were soon fast asleep; but at midnight the last of the rain fell, the mists mustered in long troops, and filed away over the hills. The moon rose, marching grandly up a sky such as city chimneys never see; mountains that had been curtained out with rain-clouds lifted their gloomy heads against the horizon, or bowed their brawny shoulders down to the plains to catch the silver benediction of the hour. Streams struggling here and there through hollows, with their swollen burden of waters, flung up glances of delight to the sky, as they had now light to go on their stumbling way. A plover in his nest felt the silver touch upon his wing, stirred among the rushes, gave a cry of welcome, and was at rest again.

The cry awakened Molly, who was sleeping with her head against the opening of a broken arch, and her face to the moonlight. She had been dreaming of a tavern row, of police, of a jail, of hunger, brawling, curses, and jury. She opened her eyes to the white purity of the moon, her ears to the dreamy echo of the plover's note, and her soul to its first knowledge of peace. She laid the sleeping child out of her arms upon a corner of his mother's gown, covered him with her own old rag of a mantle, stole out from the shadow of the walls, and stood dazzled and bewildered in the mellow glory of the night. The land on which she looked, was as new to her as if she had been led to the spot blindfold. What strange place was this where heaven bent towards her like a mother, where the very air seemed full of kindness, and the earth looked soothed, as if cruelty and wickedness had been charmed away from it for evermore? She had seen the moon many a time, looking with a ghastly glance of disgust on dismal scenes to which she, Molly, had belonged. She had never been gazed at, all alone, by a tender eye like this. A strain of sublime enthusiasm was wrung from her ignorant soul. A wild regret for being what she was, sprang out of the passiveness of her degradation. She put her poor face between her hands and fell to weeping.

She sat down on a stone by the roadside, and with her head upon her arms dropped asleep. The sun was high when a sound of whooping and shouting—drover's cries—roused her. A troop of kyloes were shoving along the road towards her, a man mounted on a horse bringing up the rear. Molly's instinct to hide from every face as an enemy's, rose up within her, and carried her back trembling to the ruin. But she peeped out from the shelter of the old window, and saw a pleasant picture framed there; a long winding sunny road, sunny mountains, the wild little troop of rugged cattle tossing their horned heads and plunging along, and the figure on horseback behind. As the figure came nearer, Molly drew back into her hiding-place, with a start of dismay. The man was the owner of that stolen frieze coat. "Whoop, whoop!" shouted the drover's rough voice, and "click, click!" went his smacking whip,

but Molly heard nothing but "Thief! thief!" The flock went past, and Molly, shaking with terror, gathered the baby in her arms, and buried her face in its chubby shoulder. Had they tracked her out to this beautiful land, to drag her back to the town and fling her into a jail? They had passed her by, but would they not come back and find her?

Tramp! tramp! again; but to-day over a burning road, with a dazzling sun above their heads. They had a grand performance before a roadside cottage, the pipes and fiddle clamoured which should be loudest. Miss Matilda danced her hornpipe, Molly sang her ballads with a wild ringing fear of the drover in her voice, but a scrupulous perseverance, that told of her determination to earn her living honestly. She had a fine true voice, with a strain of sweetness and pathos in it that startled people, coming from so dingy a figure. The woman of the cottage was touched by it, more than by the dancing and singing of the Rooneys. The baby had sobbed an accompaniment to Molly's song, and the baby got some new goat's milk and bread. And for the singer's sake the rest of the hungry band had a meal of new potatoes.

"Yer come from the town?" said the motherly woman, who had taken the baby in her arms whilst Molly ate. "Ay! the town's a bad place. There's a poor dhrover body gone past a bit ago, only's been four days away, an' has come home without his fine coat that he counted to do him the rest o' his life. Stole from before his eyes by a vagabond thief o' a girl, before he'd been an hour in Dublin."

The blood ran into Molly's face for shame, and out of it again for fear.

"No, but I didn't mean that all the town-folks is bad!" said the woman, kindly.

By evening they arrived at a wayside inn, where a number of men were drinking. There had been a fair not far off the day before, and some were only now on their way home from it. They were smoking and drinking in a little earthen-floored room, and had just been talking of the luckless drover and his coat, he having passed there about half an hour before. It seemed he was scattering his story behind him, over the country as he went, like the crumbs cast by the boy in the tale.

The Rooneys saw their chance and pushed their way up to the door of the tavern. Molly's black eyes, full of an agonising question, peered in at the door of the close noisy room, and scanned the faces present. The one she dreaded was not there.

The tramps were welcome here with their music and dancing. Father and mother Rooney were king and queen of the hour, and were treated to steaming glasses of punch. Matilda's hornpipe was applauded to the echo. When it came to Molly's turn, she made two or three pitiful attempts to sing, and failed wretchedly. She was over-tired. None of them had such a wearisome burthen to carry as she had had, the heavy baby clinging for ever round her neck. The fear, too, was in her throat yet, and she could not sing.

Father Rooney came over to the corner where she sat, and threatened her with his fist in her face. She broke down, turned her face to the wall, and wept. A young man sitting on a table at some distance had been watching her attentively, and took note of this scene. He was a strong-built, frieze-clad, well-to-do-looking young farmer with a brave brown face, and very kindly and sweet-tempered blue eyes. He was not drinking like the rest, nor making a noise. What he saw in Molly to fix his attention, people might have wondered if any one there had been temperate enough for observation. But wonders are not rare. That he saw she had sorrow in her heart, may not be thought a sufficient reason. Perhaps he divined her youth through the ageing disguises that hung about her. Perhaps he had a mother who prayed for him at home, or a sister whom he petted, and it irked him to see a girl with traces of beauty and feeling in her unwashed face, subject to the threats of one like Tim Rooney, forced to take a prominent place in a gathering like this, and turning with her grief to the wall in her voidness of expectation of sympathy or succour. He saw at all events that she was choking with thirst, and that her lips were baked. He fetched and offered her a glass of lemonade.

"Toss it off, my girl!" said he, "it'll keep the skin from crackin' on them dry lips o' yours. Ye'll give us a snatch o' a song by-and-by."

Molly seized and drank, wondered, rejoiced, looked at his frieze coat and shuddered; looked at his kind strong face, and worshipped.

"I can sing now. Is there any song you would like to have?" said Molly, tingling with her gratitude.

"Give us the '*Colleen dhas crotheen a mo'*' (Pretty girl milking her cow)," said John Haverty.

Molly lifted her voice and sang as she had never sang before. The young farmer looked at her kindling eyes, and felt a curious desire to know what she would look like, were her face washed, and were she dressed in clean garments like a fresh country lass, accustomed to keep company with the larks in the morning.

The song being over, Tim Rooney came up and struck the songstress on the mouth. He had become brutalised by drink, and cursed her for whining an old drimendru instead of one of the racy new-fashioned ballads he had furnished her with. His stray blows fell on the child.

"Not the child! oh, not the child!" cried Molly, with the blood dropping from her lips; for by dint of moaning and crying to the little thing, and being worried by it, she had grown to love it strangely. She wrapped it in her arms and went out of the cabin with it, just in time to escape from the hubbub that was raised, when John Haverty stretched Tim Rooney on the floor.

She sat down on the edge of a well at some distance from the house, and washed the blood from her mouth, and soothed the baby's cries. It was so wonderfully new to Molly to have a

protector, that it wakened in her a happy amazement which dulled the sense of physical pain. She bathed her wound mechanically, but she did not feel it.

Presently Haverty came out to look for her; the only one who missed or thought of her.

"My poor girl!" said he, "yer badly hurt. But I settled yon ruffian in a way that'll make him think twice, before he lifts his hand to strike a woman again. Here, hould this to yer mouth, asthore, it'll keep the blood away," and he gave her a fine snow-white *nappikeen* (head-kerchief), which he had bought at the fair as a present for his mother.

"Now I tell you what it is, my girl," said he, "you must lave the bad company yer in. Yer not o' their sort, it's plain to see, an' you ought to get quit o' them."

"Not of their sort." Molly exalted above anybody! Above those whose honesty she had emulated! Oh, if the drover were to appear now and denounce her to this friend. She looked fearfully over her shoulder, but there was no cause for fear. Peace and security were all around her.

"I'd be glad to do anything you bid me," said Molly, out of her heart, "for no man ever spoke so kind to me before. But I wouldn't know what to do, nor where to go, an' besides, I'm sure they'd kill the baby among them if I left it with them. It'll not be better o' them blows this good bit. Whisht! whisht! my darlin'!"

"Yer heart's in the right place," said Haverty, admiringly. "Yer ought to look to yerself, though. Ye could do rightly. The country's a good place to make a shift in, not like the town. Can ye sew?"

"No."

"Can ye read?"

"No."

"Well, ye could work in the fields like many a heartsome lass, an' people would be fightin' for lave to give ye a lodgin' for a stave o' one o' them darlin' songs of yours. See here! There'll be a match-makin', to-morrow night, over at Widow Conneely's in the bog. Lave this clan, an' make a start o' 't for yerself at wanst. I'll be lookin' out for ye, an' I'll put in a good word for ye, I'll tell ye the songs that'll stale their hearts. Ye'll come?"

If he had asked Molly to make an effort to walk across the sea to America she would have promised to try. She gave him her word she would be at the Widow Conneely's. He had been throwing pebbles down the well, emphasising his words by an occasional splash; now he bade her good night, and walked away across the moor, strong and sturdy in the moonlight with his black-thorn stick in his hand. And Molly, with the baby, crept away to the barn where they were to pass the night. There was not much sleep for Molly, however. All the time she lay there, she was thinking and dreaming of the kind compassion of John Haverty, who had at once become the idol of her hungry heart, which had been so starved of love all its life. She thought if he would only give her a corner

of his field to work in, and come and speak to her like that for a minute or two every day, she would reach the very summit of earthly happiness. By daylight she was up again walking about, having left the child wrapped in the straw by its mother's side. She wandered about in the crimson dawn, meeting in her own wild untutored way wonderful revelations of a new life, drinking in with the pure air exhilarating draughts of refreshed vitality which brought rushes of health into her languid veins.

She went down to a lonely river among the hills and bathed. She wrung out her long matted hair; she had not even a comb to comb it with. She washed the blood-stains from the white kerchief Haverty had given her, and folded it across her shoulders. Then she cried more passionately than she had ever cried for pain or hunger, because she could not cast away her dirty ragged gown, having no other. She bethought her of the motherly woman whom they had left two miles behind them on the road, who had taken the tramps into her tidy cottage, and held the baby while Molly ate of her bounty. So curiously had trust in humanity been roused in the girl, that she set off at once, running along the high road to throw herself on the mercy of this person almost unknown, believing that she would help her in her dilemma. The motherly woman was feeding her hens before her door, when Molly appeared to her coming along in the sunrise, with her half-dried hair hanging over her shoulders, her eyes lighted with an eager hope, and her face clear and bright with the new flush of health and vigour that possessed her.

"I don't know but I may be a fool," said the motherly woman, as she sorted through the garments in her household chest; "but I took a likin' to ye at the first when I seen ye so down an' unheartsome among them screechin', jumpin', bould-faced crew. An' I like ye bether this mornin', for ye've got more o' the clane country look about ye, an' a purty face o' yer own ye have. God be with you, then, and take the loand o' this turkey red; your nappikeen 'll cover the misfit o' the body. An' if ye don't turn out honest, it's God 'll settle accounts with you, an' not me."

The "turkey red" was an ample calico gown of that warm hue, and when Molly was arrayed in it, and the white kerchief on her shoulders, the motherly woman was so delighted with her appearance that she insisted on dressing her hair to make her complete.

"I can plat beautiful," said she, "an' I'll plat it up to the crown of yer head, the way I used to do my own little girl's, before the Lord took her from me, Heaven be her bed! But let that stan' till we get the cup o' tea. My good man's from home, an' there's nobody here but our two sels."

Thus treated, Molly's heart overflowed with delight. While breakfast was preparing, she sought for a smooth pool outside, and surveyed the alteration in herself, coming back on tip-toe. The words, "an' a purty face o' yer own ye have!" were racing through her head; but

the idea they conveyed was too sudden and wildly original to be accepted at once as the truth. And yet, when the rest of the world was changing so fast, why should not she change too? When her head was covered with shining braids she was still more a wonder to herself. Where had this beauty come from? Could mere soap and water, coloured calico, and the motherly woman's nimble fingers, work such a miracle?

She stayed all day at the tidy cottage, being afraid to go back to the Rooneys. After sundown she set out, asking her way to the Widow Conneely's. It was a long walk, and she arrived with her cheeks in a glow. John Haverty was smoking his pipe as she came up, and he did not know her.

"I've come," said she.

"Why," said he, "you're never the singin' girl that was with the thramps last night?"

"I am," said Molly, enchanted, but alarmed at his not knowing her. "You promised to tell me what to sing."

He beamed on her with his blue eyes, taking in her new appearance slowly, by a long look.

"I'll tell ye," said he, putting his pipe in his pocket.

He took her in to the Widow Conneely. He placed her in a seat apart, a little brown stool, set up in a deep window-seat, with a strip of dark-green curtain by her shoulder, and the remains of the sunset barring the little window-pane with gold beyond her. It was by accident, of course, that these things arranged themselves so as to make of her a pretty picture for the unconscious pleasing of uncultivated eyes. But there she sat, entitled to respect by the deference that Haverty paid her.

The people had not gathered in for the dance; only a few old men and women were there; the piper had not yet come. Haverty sat with one leg across the end of a table, talking to Molly, getting her to sing over verses of songs for him, and deciding which she was to sing for the company. Molly's eyes and cheeks grew brighter and brighter, and her voice richer and sweeter; as the dusk deepened, the golden bars faded away behind the pane, and the red light from the turf fire drove the shadows into the corners of the cabin, and fell full across John Haverty's eyes, which were watering as only an Irishman's eyes can water at music.

"Yer made o' the right thrue stuff," said he, "or yer singin' tells lies on ye. A man might be happy that had you chirpin' like a cricket by his fireside, avourneen! Look at me, asthareen, an' thray could ye like me. It's not long since we saw each other first, but I'm not a bad fellow if you can take the soft side o' me, an' I never seen a girl that could take the heart out o' my body before."

Enter the piper, followed by a troop of noisy young men and women.

If Molly's answer had been forthcoming it would have been lost in the storm of greetings that followed. As it was, she sat silent and red-cheeked, and Haverty was dragged away by a band of companions. Now

the piper began to play, and the dancing commenced, while a small table was placed to one side of the fire, with some pipes, tobacco, and whisky;—for what purpose did not appear. When Molly looked up, Haverty was dancing gaily with a pretty girl in a light print dress and blue ribbon, with smooth fair hair, and saucy eyes, and a coquettish air about her. People watched the pair with interest and admiration. Both were young, good-looking, and capital dancers. They seemed made for each other and for the jig they were footing. The girl seemed fully aware of the admiration she excited, and coquetted openly with her partner.

"Then they're the handsome pair!" cried one near Molly.

"Ay, throth!" said another; "it's a wonder the ould men isn't come to make up the match."

"Ould blood is slow; but it'll not take them long in the doin' when they do go at it. Both o' them's rich enough to make the young people happy."

"What is it?" said Molly, touching her neighbour's elbow.

"Oh! it's John Haverty and Katty Nee that's to have their match made to-night. You don't know, bein' a stranger. That's them dancin' to others. They'll be married at vanst, I believe, as soon as the bargain's made."

Molly stared at the dancers, and then at the speaker, and took it all in. This was his match-making—that was what he had called it—only he had not said it was his own. It had all been arranged long ago, and he had been laughing at the poor tramp. Molly's head fell back behind her little strip of curtain.

"I do think that strange girl's sick in the corner, there," said some one by-and-by.

"No," said Molly, wiping the cold drops from her face with the corner of her nappikeen; "but it's very warm. Will you give me a dhrink?" Habit is second nature; and Molly's habit of patience was strong.

Two men came in just then, who were received with marks of great respect. One was a white-haired old man, the uncle of John Haverty, the richest farmer in the country; the other was the drover who had lost his coat in Dublin, and the father of the pretty bride in prospect, Katty Nee. Ah, Molly! "The fox may run, but he's caught at last."

The men sat down at the table which had been prepared for them, and smoked their pipes, and laid their heads together. A lively discussion soon began between them, and the pipes were often taken out of their mouths, and the table was often thumped; neighbours looked on with admiration, and listened in awe. By this time, the piper, who had been sipping out of a glass by his side, began to doze over his pipes, which grew inarticulate in their utterance, then silent. The dancers were still, and there was an outcry for music; a general demand for Molly, the singing-girl, to lift up a jig from the corner. So Molly sang many a mad merry jig and whirling reel, only now and again breaking down with a gasp for breath,

while Katty and Haverty danced wilder and faster, and the lookers-on laughed and applauded, and the piper woke up and grumbled, and the people said Molly had a jewel of a voice. God bless her!

But at last John Haverty's uncle got up with an oath and dragged his nephew out of the dance and over to the table by the arm. The dancing stopped in a moment. Molly's tune fell from her lips; the young men smiled to each other and shrugged their shoulders; the girls opened their eyes wide, and plucked each other's skirts; the old women groaned and flung up their eyes to the cabin rafters; the old men cocked their ears and shifted their feet on the floor, as they were used to do on Sundays when preparing to listen to the sermon. Every one expected that something important was going to be said regarding the business of the night.

"It's time ye stopped yer jiggin' foolery," said the old man, angrily, "an' took a thought o' yer own business. Here we've settled all—land, sheep, house, an' everything, an' there he's stuck fast in the black cattle, an' sorra an inch 'll he budge for me. Sit down there an' make yer own match, for divil a finger more I'll meddle in't."

"I want you to make no match for me," said the young man, gravely, "an' I tould ye that, last week. I tould it to Darby Nee, too, but nothin' would do you an' him but ye'd have a match-makin' here to-night. It's all yer own affair, an' if ye've fought over it ye can settle it between ye. I've no hand in it. Katty Nee's a purty girl, an' a good dancer, an' many's the jig I danced with her; but I never axed her to be my wife, an' I never will. She doesn't want me, an' I don't want her. She has a sweet-heart here to-night, lookin' as sour as butter-milk because his farm isn't as big as mine, an' she'd rather have his little finger than my whole body an' sow! wouldn't ye, Katty? An' for my share," said Haverty, looking back at the window, "seem' that this was to be my match-makin', I thried a little business for mysel' an' I think my match is made; at least, it only wants wan little bit o' a word to finish the bargain. Come out here, avourneen!" said he, stepping up to the window, and drawing Molly into the light, "an' tell outforenent the people if you can take me for a husband."

The people looked surprised, but not so much so as might be expected. Such sudden "matches" are more common among them than longer courtships.

Molly felt that it was like certain death to cross that floor and face Darby Nee, yet, to save her life, she could not have resisted that hand drawing her on.

"A common thramp from Dublin!" stuttered the old uncle, furiously.

"A beggar, instead of my girl with her fortune!" shouted the bullying drover.

Molly, pale and cowering, clinging to Haverty's arm, lifted her eyes with the old fearful look that was common to them in Dublin, and the drover, fixing his fox-like eyes on her, recognised her in a moment.

"Oho!" he cried, "oho! A Dublin thramp, did ye say? Faix, an' we didn't know what fine company we were in! I think you an' me has met before this, young woman. A thief, neighbours," he went on, his voice rising with his anger as the remembrance of his wrong came fully back upon him; "the very thief that stole the coat I was tellin' ye of, in the pawnbroker's shop in Dublin. Then I wish ye good luck o' the wife ye have picked, Misther Haverty. Dacent girls isn't good enough for ye, so ye have one that'll do ye credit!"

Molly never heard Haverty's answer nor the murmurs of the people, for at the first word of accusation she shot through the crowd and disappeared from the door.

When the motherly woman got up next morning and began to bustle about her tidy cottage, she found her "turkey red" hanging on a pin behind the kitchen door, and Molly's old ragged gown that had hung in its place gone. Trembling with agitation, she counted her half-dozen tea-spoons, and felt that her "stocking" was safe in its nook up the chimney. Then "thank God," said the motherly woman, "I knewed she was dacent, but she might ha' said good-bye to a body, an' not come slippin' in an' out in the night, like a sperrit!"

That was the last that was heard of Molly. John Haverty refused to believe what the drover asserted, and swore before all the people that it was a calumny. The Rooneys having passed on from the place, there was no one to bear witness against Molly's character, and nothing to prove her guilty, but her own sudden flight. Haverty had the river dragged, rode to the neighbouring villages, and inquired at the cottages on the roadsides, but not a trace of Molly was found.

Two years passed, and the facts of Molly's appearance and disappearance in the district were told as a romantic story, and Haverty was pointed to as the young man who had been so "quarely crossed in love." Nevertheless, his farm was thriving, and his uncle, who had long since forgiven him for falling in love with the tramp who had so considerably taken herself off, did not despair of making a capital match for him yet, though Katty Nee was married.

Meantime, the earth had not swallowed up Molly. She had rushed to the river first, but when she stood on the brink of the water and saw the sun rising above her head, she felt that after all death was worse than anything that had happened to her yet. She wandered at random, with much fatigue and suffering, through deserted paths in the hills, till she made her way at last to the dwelling of a herd who lived at the other side the brow of the tallest mountain that looked on the valley where so many strange haps had befallen her in so little a space of time. Here she arrived opportunely and was hired as a servant, and here she remained.

Molly worked well and learned many things; her employers were friendly and found her work. They were perched up so high on the mountain that they seemed to live beside the sun; the air they breathed was so sweet, and the active life they led so healthful, that Molly grew strong in body and cheerful in mind, and could romp with her master's children, and mock the larks with her singing, for the children's delight. By winter-time she had spun herself a peasant's dress of crimson flannel, with knitted blue worsted stockings for her feet.

The third year had begun, when on an autumn day John Haverty walked the hills with his black-thorn in hand, seeking this herd who had charge of many cattle, wanting to put a flock under his care. Coming round a heathery rock very high in the blue air, he met Molly face to face, coming along the narrow path with a bundle of purple heath on her shoulder. Molly herself, but bright, sunburnt, and buxom, hardly a trace of the old Molly left to know her by.

"Molly!" cried Haverty.

"Yes!" said Molly.

He caught her hand in delight.

"No," said Molly, drawing it away, and with a proud lip. "Ye mustn't shake hands with a thief."

"Look here!" said John. "Do ye think I ever believed you lyin' ruffian?"

"It was no lie, though," said Molly, hanging her head. "It was thrue."

"Whisht! Avourneen," said Haverty. "An' what if ye did? Is it for the stalin' o' a rag o' a coat you'd make such a murther, an' you hungry, or—or somethin', I'll be bound?" he added, hesitatingly, with a pathetic look of appeal to her for a justification of herself.

"I was starved!" sobbed Molly, "an' my father was dyin' an' callin' for what I hadn't to give him. I never was taught any better, but I've saved up the price o' the coat, all my wages these years, an' you'll give it to him, please, when ye see him again. An' when you talk to yer wife about me, don't call me Molly the thief, nor Molly the thramp, but just a friend o' yours that ye were kind to when she was in trouble."

"I have no wife," said Haverty, "an' I'll never have wan but you."

John Haverty had his will, for they were married the next morning on their way home to the snug farm-house in a nest of trees where Haverty lived with his mother. Darby, the drover, was paid to hold his tongue, and no one else dared believe a word against Haverty's wife; and Haverty's wife and the motherly woman are bosom friends.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

CHAPTER IV. IN THE BALANCE.

NOT one word came from Mrs. Carruthers for full six weeks. The hope which had sprung up in George Dallas's breast after the interview with his mother in the housekeeper's room had gone through the various stages common to unfulfilled desires in men of sanguine temperaments. It had been very bright at first, and when no letter came after the lapse of a week, it had begun to grow dim, and then he had endeavoured to reason with himself that the very fact of no letter coming ought to be looked upon as a good sign, as showing that "something was doing." Then the absence of any news caused his hope to flicker until the recollection of the old adage, that "no news was good news," made it temporarily bright again; then as the time for payment of the renewed bill grew nearer and nearer, so did George Dallas's prospects become gloomier and yet more gloomy, and at last the light of hope went out, and the darkness of despair reigned paramount in his bosom. What could his mother be about? She must have pretended that she had some bill of her own to pay, and that the money was immediately required; old Carruthers must have questioned her about it, and there must have been a row; she must have tried to "collar" the amount out of the housekeeping—no! the sum was too large; that was absurd! She had old friends—people who knew and loved her well, and she must have asked some of them to lend it to her, and probably been refused; old friends always refuse to lend money. She must have tried—confound it all, he did not know, he could not guess what she had tried! All he did know, to his sorrow, was, that she had not sent the money; all he knew, to his joy, was, that though he was constantly seeing Stewart Routh, that worthy had, as yet, uttered no word of discontent at its non-appearance.

Not he! In the hand which Stewart Routh was at that moment playing in the greater game of life, the card representing a hundred and forty pounds was one on which he bestowed very little attention. It might, or it might not, form part of the odd trick, either way; but it had

very little influence on his strategy and finesse. There were times when a five-pound note might have turned his chance, but this was not one of them. Driven into a corner, pressed for the means of discharging paltry debts, harassed by dunning creditors, Stewart Routh would have needed and claimed the money due to him by George Dallas. Present circumstances were more favourable, and he only needed George Dallas's assistance in his schemes. For, Stewart Routh's measures for raising money were of all kinds and of all dimensions; the elephant's trunk of his genius could pick up a five-pound-note bet from a flat at *carle*, or could move the lever of a gigantic city swindle. And he was "in for a large thing" just at this time. Men attending professionally the betting-ring at the great steeple-chase then coming off, noticed Routh's absence with wonder, and though he occasionally looked in at two or three of the second-rate sporting clubs of which he was a member, he was listless and preoccupied. If he took a hand at cards, though from mere habit he played closely and cautiously, yet he made no great points, and was by no means, as usual, the dashing Paladin round whose chair men gathered thickly, and whose play they backed cheerily. No! The paltry gains of the dice-box and cards paled before the glamour of the fortune to be made in companies and shares; the elephant's trunk was to show its strength now, as well as its dexterity, and the genius which had hitherto been confined to "bridging" a pack of cards, or "securing" a die, talking over a flat or winning money of a greenhorn, was to have its vent in launching a great City Company. Of this scheme Dallas knew nothing. A disinherited man, with neither name nor influence, would have been utterly useless; but he was reserved for possible contingencies. Routh was always sending to him to call, always glad to see him when he called, and never plagued him with allusions to his debt. But in their interviews nothing but mere generalities were discussed, and George noticed that he always received a hint to go, whenever Mr. Deane was announced.

But although Stewart Routh was seen but seldom in his usual haunts, he was by no means inactive or neglectful of his own interests. Day after day he spent several hours in the City, diligently engaged in the formation of his new Company, a grand undertaking for working

some newly discovered silver mines in the Brazils; and day after day were his careful scheming, his elaborate plotting, his vivacious daring, and his consummate knowledge of the world, rewarded by the steady progress which the undertaking made. The temporary offices in Tokenhouse-yard were besieged with inquirers; good brokers with City names of high standing offered their services; splendid reports came from the engineers, who had been sent out to investigate the state of the mines. Only one thing was wanting, and that was capital; capital, by hook or by crook, Mr. Stewart Routh must have, and was determined to have. If the affair were to be launched, the brokers said, the next week must see it done; and the difficulty of raising the funds for the necessary preliminary expenses was becoming day by day more and more palpable and insurmountable to Stewart Routh.

The interval of time that had witnessed so much activity on the part of Mr. Stewart Routh, and had advanced his schemes close to a condition of imminent crisis, had been productive of nothing new or remarkable in the existence of George Dallas. That is to say, on the surface of it. He was still leading the desultory life of a man who, with an intellectual and moral nature capable of better deeds and nobler aspirations, is incurably weak, impulsive, and swayed by a love of pleasure; a man incapable of real self-control, and with whom the gratification of the present is potent, above all suggestions or considerations of the contingencies of the future. He worked a little, and his talent was beginning to tell on the popularity of the paper for which he worked, *The Mercury*, and on the perceptions of its proprietors. George Dallas was a man in whose character there were many contradictions. With much of the fervour of the poetic temperament, with its sensuousness and its sensitiveness, he had a certain nonchalance about him, a fitful indifference to external things, and a spasmodic impatience of his surroundings. This latter was apt to come over him at times when he was apparently merriest, and it had quite as much to do with his anxiety to get his debt to Routh discharged, and to set himself free from Routh, as any moral sense of the danger of keeping such company, or any moral consciousness of the waste of his life, and the deterioration of his character. George Dallas had no knowledge of the true history of Routh's career; of the blacker shades of his character he was entirely ignorant. In his eyes, Routh was a clever man, and a good-for-nothing, a "black sheep" like himself, a sheep for whose blackness Dallas (as he did in his own case) held circumstances, the white sheep, anything, and everything except the man himself, to blame. He was dimly conscious that his associate was stronger than he, stronger in will, stronger in knowledge of men, and somehow, though he never defined or acknowledged the feeling to himself, he mistrusted and feared him. He liked him, too; he felt grateful to him for his help; he did not discern the interested motives

which actuated him, and, indeed, they were but small, and would by no means have accounted for all Routh's proceedings towards Dallas. Nor is it necessary that they should; a villain is not, therefore, altogether precluded from likings, or even the feebler forms of friendship, and Dallas was not simply silly and egotistical when he believed that Routh felt kindly and warmly towards him. Still, whether a merciful and occult influence was at work within him, or the tide of his feelings had been turned by his stolen interview with his mother, by his being brought into such positive contact with her life and its conditions, and having been made to realise the bitterness he had infused into it, it were vain to inquire. Whatever his motives, however mixed their nature or confused their origin, he was filled, whenever he was out of Routh's presence, and looked his life in the face, with an ardent longing to "cut the whole concern," as he phrased it in his thoughts. And Harriet?—for the "whole concern" included her, as he was forced to remember—Harriet, the only woman whose society he liked—Harriet, whom he admired with an admiration as pure and respectful as he could have felt for her, had he met her in the least equivocal way, even in the most exalted position. Well, he would be very sorry to lose Harriet, but, after all, she cared only for Routh; and he was dangerous. "I must turn over a new leaf, for *her* sake" (he meant for his mother's), "and I can't turn it while they are at my elbows." From which conviction on the part of George Dallas it is sufficiently evident that Routh and Harriet had ample reason to apprehend that Dallas, on whom they desired to retain a hold, for more reasons than one, was slipping through their fingers.

George Dallas was more than usually occupied with such thoughts one morning, six weeks after his unsuccessful visit to Poyning's. He had been very much with Routh and Deane during this period, and yet he had begun to feel aware, with a jealous and suspicious sense of it, too, that he really knew very little of what they had been about. They met in the evening, in pursuit of pleasure, and they abandoned themselves to it; or they met at Routh's lodgings, and Dallas surrendered himself to the charm which Harriet's society always had for him. But he had begun to observe of late that there was no reference to the occupation of the earlier part of the day, and that while there was apparently a close bond of mutual confidence or convenience between Routh and Deane, there was some under-current of mutual dislike.

"If my mother can only get me out of this scrape, and I can get the Piccadilly people to take my serial," said George Dallas to himself one morning, when April was half gone, and "the season" was half come, "I shall get away somewhere, and go in for work in earnest." He looked, ruefully enough, round the wretched little bedroom, at whose small window he was standing, as he spoke; and he thought impa-

tiently of his debt to his coarse shrewish landlady, and of the small liabilities which hampered him as effectually as the great one. It was later than his usual hour of rising, and he felt ill and despondent: not anxious to face the gay, rich, busy world outside, and still less inclined for his own company and waking thoughts in the shabby little den he tenanted. A small room, a mere apology for a sitting-room, was reached through a rickety folding-door, which no human ingenuity could contrive to keep shut, if any one opened the other door leading to the narrow passage, and the top of the steep dark staircase. Through this yawning aperture George lounged disconsolately into the little room beyond, eyeing with strong disfavour the preparations for his breakfast, which preparations chiefly consisted of a dirty tablecloth and a portion of a stale loaf, popularly known as a "heel." But his gaze travelled further, and brightened; for on the cracked and blistered wooden chimney-piece lay a letter in his mother's hand. He darted at it, and opened it eagerly, then held it for a moment in his hand unread. His face turned very pale, and he caught his breath once or twice as he muttered:

"Suppose it's to say she can't do anything at all." But the fear, the suspense were over with the first glance at his mother's letter. She wrote:

"Poynings, 13th April, 1861.

"My dear George. I have succeeded in procuring you the money, for which you tell me you have such urgent need. Perhaps if I admired, and felt disposed to act up to a lofty standard of sentimental generosity, I should content myself with making this announcement, and sending you the sum which you assure me will release you from your difficulties, and enable you to commence the better life on which you have led me to hope you are resolved. But, not only do the circumstances under which I have contrived to get this money for you, make it impossible for me to act in this way, but I consider I should be very wrong, and quite wanting in my duty, if I failed to make you understand, at the cost of whatever pain to myself, the price I have had to pay for the power of aiding you.

"You have occasioned me much suffering, George. You, my only child, to whom I looked in the first dark days of my early bereavement, with such hope and pride as I cannot express, and as only a mother can understand—you have darkened my darkness and shadowed my joy, you have been the source of my deepest anxiety, though not the less for that, as you well know, the object of my fondest love. I don't write this to reproach you—I don't believe in the efficacy of reproach; but merely to tell you the truth—to preface another truth, the full significance of which it may prove very beneficial to you to understand. Sorrow I have known through you, and shame I have experienced for you. You have cost me many tears, whose marks can never be effaced

from my face or my heart; you have cost me infinite disappointment, bitterness, heart-sickness, and domestic wretchedness; but now, for the first time, you cost me shame on my own account. Many and great as my faults and short-comings have been through life, deceit was equally abhorrent to my nature and foreign to my habits. But for you, George, for your sake, to help you in this strait, to enable you to release yourself from the trammels in which you are held, I have descended to an act of deceit and meanness, the recollection of which must for ever haunt me with a keen sense of humiliation. I retain enough of my former belief in you, my son, to hope that what no other argument has been able to effect, this confession on my part may accomplish, and that you, recognising the price at which I have so far rescued you, may pause, and turn from, the path leading downward into an abyss of ruin, from which no effort of mine could avail to snatch you. I have procured the money you require, by an expedient suggested to me accidentally, just when I had begun utterly to despair of ever being able to accomplish my ardent desire, by a conversation which took place at dinner between Mr. Carruthers and his family solicitor, Mr. Tatham. The conversation turned on a curious and disgraceful family story which had come under his knowledge lately. I need not trouble you to read, nor myself to write, its details; you will learn them when I see you, and give you the money; and I do not doubt, I dare not doubt, George, that you will feel all I expect you to feel, when you learn to how deliberate, laborious, and mean a deception I have descended for your sake. I can never do the same thing again; the expedient is one that it is only possible to use once, and which is highly dangerous even in that one instance. So, if even you were bad and callous enough to calculate upon a repetition of it, which I could not believe, my own dear boy, I am bound to tell you that it never could be. Unless Mr. Carruthers should change his mind, consequent upon an entire, radical, and most happy change in your conduct, all pecuniary assistance on my part must be entirely impossible. I say this, thus strongly, out of the kindest and best motives towards you. Your unexpected appearance and application agitated and distressed me very much; not but that the sight of you, under any circumstances, must always give me pleasure, however closely pursued and overtaken by pain. For several days I was so completely upset by the recollection of your visit, and the strong and desperate necessity that existed for repressing all traces of such feelings, that I was unable to think over the expedients by which I might procure the money you required. Then as I began to grow a little quieter, accident gave me the hint upon which I have acted secretly and safely. Come down to Poynings in three days from this time. Mr. Carruthers is at present away at an agricultural meeting at York, and I can see you at Amherst, without difficulty or danger. Go to the

town, but not to the inn. Wait about until you see my carriage. This is the 13th: I shall expect you on the 17th, by which day I hope to have the money ready for you.

"And now, my dear boy, how shall I end this letter? What shall I say? What can I say that I have not said again and again, and with sadly little effect, as you will not deny? But I forbear, and I hope. A feeling that I cannot define, an instinct, tells me that a crisis in my life is near. And what can such a crisis in my life mean, except in reference to you, my beloved and only child? In your hands lies all the future, all the disposition of the 'few and evil' years which remain to me. How are you going to deal with them? Is the love, which can never fail or falter, to be tried and wounded to the end, George, or is it to see any fruition in this world? Think over this question, my son, and let me read in your face, when I see you, that the answer is to be one of hope. You are much changed, George, the bitterness is succeeding the honey in your mouth; you are 'giving your strength for that which is not meat, and your labour for that which satisfieth not,' and though all the lookers-on at such a career as yours can see, and always do see, its emptiness and insufficiency plainly, what does their wisdom, their experience, avail? But if wisdom and experience come to *yourself*, that makes all the difference. If you have learned, and I venture to hope you *have*, that the delusive light is but a 'Will of the Wisp,' you will cease to pursue it. Come to me, then, my boy. I have kept my word to you, at such a cost as you can hardly estimate, seeing that no heart can impart *all* its bitterness to another; will you keep yours to me?"

"C. L. CARRUTHERS."

"What does she mean? What can she mean?" George Dallas asked himself this question again and again, as he stood looking at the letter in his hand. "What has she done? A mean and deliberate deceit—some dishonourable transaction? My mother could not do anything deserving to be so called. It is impossible. Even if she could contemplate such a thing, she would not know how to set about it. God bless her!"

He sat down by the table, drew the dingy Britannia metal teapot over beside his cup, and sat with his hand resting idly upon the distorted handle, still thinking less of the relief which the letter had brought him, than of the mysterious terms in which it was couched.

"She can't have got it out of Carruthers without his knowing anything about it?" he mused. "No; besides, getting it from *him* at all, is precisely the thing she told me she could not do. Well, I must wait to know; but how good of her to get it! Who's the fellow who says a man can have only one mother? By Jove, how right he is!"

Then George ate his breakfast hastily, and, putting the precious letter in his breast-pocket, went to Routh's lodgings.

"I dare say they're not up," he thought, as he knocked at the door, and patiently awaited the lingering approach of the slipshod servant. "Routh was as late as I was last night, and I know she always sits up for him."

He was right; they had not yet appeared in the sitting-room, and he had time for a good deal of walking up and down, and much cogitation over his mother's letter, before Harriet appeared. She was looking anxious, Dallas thought, so he stepped forward even more eagerly than usual, and told her in hurried tones of gladness that the post had brought him good news, and that his mother was going to give him the money.

"I don't know how she has contrived to get it, Mrs. Routh," he said.

"Does she not tell you, then?" asked Harriet, as she eyed with some curiosity the letter which Dallas had taken out of his pocket, and which he turned about in his hand, as he stood talking to her. As she spoke, he replaced the letter in his pocket, and sat down.

"No," he answered, moodily, "she does not; but she did not get it easily, I know—not without a very painful self-sacrifice; but here's Routh."

"Ha! Dallas, my boy," said Routh, after he had directed one fleeting glance of inquiry towards his wife, and almost before he had fairly entered the room. "You're early—any news?"

"Very good news," replied Dallas; and he repeated the information he had already given Harriet. Routh received it with a somewhat feigned warmth, but Dallas was too much excited by his own feelings to perceive the impression which the news really produced on Routh.

"Is your letter from the great Mr. Carruthers himself?" said Routh; "from the provincial magnate who has the honour of being step-father to you—your magnificent three-tailed bashaw?"

"Oh dear no!" said the young man, grimly; "not from him. My letter is from my mother."

"And what has she to say?" asked Harriet, quickly.

"She tells me she will very shortly be able to let me have the sum I require."

"The deuce she will!" said Routh. "Well, I congratulate you, my boy! I may say I congratulate all of us, for the matter of that; but it's rather unexpected, isn't it? I thought Mrs. Carruthers told you, when you saw her so lately, that the chances of her bleeding that charming person, her husband, were very remote."

"She did say so, and she was right; it's not from him she's going to get the money. Thank Heaven for that!"

"Certainly, if you wish it, though I'm not sure that we're right in being over-particular whence the money comes, so that it does come when one wants it. What is that example in the Eton Latin Grammar—'I came to her in season, which is the chief thing of all'? But if not from Mr. Carruthers, where does she get the money?"

"I—I don't know; but she does not get it without some horrible self-sacrifice; you may depend on that."

"My dear George, Mrs. Carruthers's case is not a singular one. We none of us get money without an extraordinary amount of self-sacrifice."

"Not a singular one! No, by George, you're right there, Routh," said the young man, bitterly; "but does that make it any lighter for her to bear, or any better for me to reflect upon? There are hundreds of vagabond sons in England at this moment, I dare say, outcasts—sources of shame and degradation to their mothers, utterly useless to any one. I swear, when I think of what my mother must have gone through to raise this money, when I think of the purpose for which it is required, I thoroughly loathe myself, and feel inclined to put a pistol to my head, or a razor to my throat. However, once free, I—there—that's the old cant again!"

As the young man said these words, he rose from his chair, and fell to pacing the room with long strides. Stewart Routh looked up sternly at him from under his bent brows, and was about to speak; but Harriet held up a finger deprecatingly, and when George Dallas seated himself again, and, with his face on his hands, remained moodily gazing at the table, she stole behind him and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"I know you would not intentionally wound me, Mr. Dallas," she said. "I say, you would not intentionally wound me," she repeated, apparently in answer to his turning sharply round and staring at her in surprise; "but you seem to forget that it was I who counselled your recent visit to your mother, and suggested your asking her for this sum of money, which you were bound in honour to pay, and without the payment of which you—who have always represented yourself as most dear to her—would have been compromised for ever. I am sorry I did so, now that I see my intentions were misunderstood, and I say so frankly."

"I swear to you, Har—Mrs. Routh—I had not the slightest idea of casting the least imputation on your motives; I was only thinking—You know I'm a little hot on the subject of my mother, not without reason, perhaps, for she's been a perfect angel to me, and—one can't expect other people to enter into these things; and, of course, it was very absurd. But you must forget it, please, Mrs. Routh, and you too, Stewart. If I spoke sharply or peevishly, don't mind it, old fellow!"

"I?" said Routh, with a crisp laugh. "I don't mind it; and I dare say I was very provoking; but you see I never knew what it was to have a mother, and I'm not much indebted to my other parent. As to the money, George—these are hard times, but if the payment of it is to drive a worthy lady to distress, or is to promote discord between you and me, why, in friendship's name, keep it, I say!"

"You're a good fellow, Stewart," said Dallas, putting out his hand; "and you, Mrs. Routh,

have forgiven me?" Though she only bowed her head slightly, she looked down into his face with a long, steady, earnest gaze. "There's an end of it, then, I trust," he continued; "we never have had words here, and I hope we're not going to begin now. As for the money, that must be paid. Whatever my mother has had to do is as good as done, and need not be whined over. Besides, I know you want the money, Stewart."

"That's simply to say that I am in my normal state. I always want money, my dear George."

"You shall have this, at all events. And now I must be off, as I have some work to do for the paper. See you very soon again. Good-bye, Stewart. The cloud has quite passed away, Mrs. Routh?"

She said "Quite," as she gave him her hand, and their eyes met. There was eager inquiry in his glance; there was calm, steadfast earnestness in hers. Then he shook hands with Routh, and left the room.

The moment the door closed behind him, the smile faded away from Routh's face, and the stern look which it always wore when he was preoccupied and thoughtful, settled down upon it. For a few minutes he was silent; then he said in a low voice: "Harriet, for the first time in your life, I suppose, you very nearly mismanaged a bit of business I entrusted to you."

His wife looked at him with wonder-lifted brows. "I, Stewart? Not intentionally, I need not tell you. But how?"

"I mean this business of George's. Did not you advise him to go down and see his mother?"

"I did. I told him he must get the money from her."

"A mistake, Harry, a mistake!" said Routh, petulantly. "Getting the money means paying us; paying us, means breaking with us?"

"Breaking with us?"

"Nothing less. Did you not hear him when the remorseful fit was on him just now? And don't you know that he's wonderfully young, considering all things, and has kept the bloom on his feelings in a very extraordinary manner? Did you not hear him mutter something about 'once free'? I did not like that, Harry!"

"Yes, I heard him say those words," replied Harriet. "It was my hearing them that made me go up to him and speak as I did."

"That was quite right, and had its effect. One does not know what he might have done if he had turned rusty just then. And it is essential that there should not be a rupture between us now."

"George Dallas shall not dream of breaking with us; at least, he shall not carry out any such idea; I will take care of that," said Harriet, "though I think you overrate his usefulness to us."

"Do I? I flatter myself there is no man in London forced to gain his bread by his wits who has a better eye for a tool than myself. And I tell you, Harry, that during all the time

we have been leading this shifty life together, we have never had any one so suitable to our purposes as George Dallas."

"He is certainly wonderfully amenable."

"Amenable? He is a good deal more than that; he is devoted. You know whose doing that is, Harry, and so do I. Why, when you laid your hand on his shoulder I saw him shiver like a leaf, and the first few words from you stilled what I thought was going to be a heavy storm."

She looked up anxiously into his face, but the smile had returned to his lips, and his brow was unclouded. Not perfectly satisfied, she suffered her eyes to drop again.

"I know perfectly well," pursued Routh, "that the manner in which Dallas has stuck to us has been owing entirely to the influence you have over him, and which is natural enough. He is a bright young fellow, impressionable as we all are—" again her eyes were raised to his face, "—at his age; and though from the scrapes he has got into, and his own natural love of play (more developed in him than in any other man I ever met), though these things keep him down, he is innately a gentleman. You are the only woman of refinement and education to whose society he has access, and as, at the same time, you have a sweet face and an enormous power of will, it is not extraordinary that he should be completely under your influence."

"Don't you overrate that same influence, Stewart?" she asked, with a faint smile.

"No man knows better how to appraise the value of his own goods—and you are my goods, are you not, Harry, and out and away, the best of all my goods? Not that that's saying much. No; I understand these things, and I understand you, and having perfect confidence and trust in you, I stand by and watch the game."

"And you're never jealous, Stewart?" she asked, with a half laugh, but with the old expression of anxious interest in her eyes.

"Jealous, Harry? Not I, my love! I tell you, I have perfect trust and confidence in you, and I know your thorough devotion to our affairs. Let us get back to what we were talking about at first—what was it exactly?"

Her eyes had dropped again at the commencement of his reply, but she raised them as he finished speaking, and said, "We were discussing the amount of George Dallas's usefulness to us."

"Exactly. His usefulness is greater than it seems. There is nothing so useful in a life like ours as the outward semblance of position. I don't mean the mere get up; that, most fools can manage; but the certain something which proclaims to his fellows and his inferiors that a man has had education and been decently bred. There are very few among our precious acquaintances who could not win Dallas's coat off his back, at cards, or billiards, or betting, but there is not one whom I could present to any young fellow of the smallest appreciation whom I might pick up. Even if their frightful

appearance were not sufficiently against them—and it is—they would say or do something in the first few minutes which would awake suspicion, whereas Dallas, even in his poverty-stricken clothes of the last few weeks, looks like a gentleman, and talks and behaves like one."

"Yes," said Harriet, reflecting, "he certainly does; and that's a great consideration, Stewart!"

"Incalculable! Besides, though he is a thorough gambler at heart, he has some other visible profession. His 'connexion with the press,' as he calls it, seems really to be a fact; he could earn a decent salary if he stuck to it. From a letter he showed me, I make out that they seem to think well of him at the newspaper office; and mind you, Harriet, he might be uncommonly useful to us some day in getting things kept out of the papers, or flying a few rumours which would take effect in the money market or at Tattersall's. Do you see all that, Harry?"

"I see it," she replied; "I suppose you're right."

"Right? Of course I am! George Dallas is the best ally—and the cheapest—we have ever had, and he must be kept with us."

"You harp upon that 'kept with us.' Are you still so persuaded that he wishes to shake us off?"

"I am. I feel convinced, from that little outburst to-night, that he is touched by this unexplained sacrifice on the part of his mother, and that in his present frame of mind he would give anything to send us adrift and get back into decent life. I feel this so strongly, Harriet," continued Routh, rising from his seat, crossing to the mantelshelf, and taking a cigar, "that I think even your influence would be powerless to restrain him, unless—"

"Unless what? Why do you pause?" she asked, looking up at him with a clear steadfast gaze.

"Unless," said Routh, slowly puffing at his newly-lighted cigar, "unless we get a fresh and a firm hold on him. He will pay that hundred and forty pounds. Once paid, that hold is gone, and with it goes our ally!"

"I see what you mean," said Harriet, after a pause, with a short mirthless laugh. "He must be what they call in the East 'compromised.' We are plague-stricken. George Dallas must be seen to brush shoulders with us. His garments must be known to have touched ours! Then the uninfected will cast him out, and he will be reduced to herd with us!"

"You are figurative, Harry, but forcible: you have hit my meaning exactly. But the main point still remains—*how* is he to be 'compromised'?"

"It is impossible to settle that hurriedly," she replied, pushing her hair back from her forehead. "But it must be done effectually, and the step which he is led to take, and which is to bind him firmly to us, must be irrevocable. Hush! Come in!"

These last words were in reply to a knock at the room door. A dirty servant-girl put her tangled head into the room, and announced "Mr. Deane" as waiting down-stairs. This statement was apparently incorrect, for the girl had scarcely made it before she disappeared, as though pulled back, and a man stepped past her, and made one stride into the middle of the room, where he stood looking round him with a suspicious leer.

He was a young man, apparently not more than two or three-and-twenty, judging by his figure and his light active movements; but cunning and deceit had stamped such wrinkles round his eyes, and graven such lines round his mouth, as are seldom to be seen in youth. His eyes, of a greenish-grey hue, were small and deeply sunk in his head; his cheek-bones were high, his cheeks fringed by a very small scrap of whisker running into a dirt-coloured tuft of hair growing underneath his chin. His figure was tall and angular, his arms and legs long and awkward, his hands and feet large and ill shaped. He wore a large thick overcoat with broad fur collar and cuffs, and a hood (also fur-lined) hanging back on his shoulders. With the exception of a very slight strip of ribbon, he had no cravat underneath his long limp turnover collar, but stuck into his shirt-front was a large and handsome diamond pin.

"Why, what the 'tarnal," he commenced, placing his arms a-kimbo and without removing his hat—"what the 'tarnal, as they say down west, is the meaning of this little game? I come here pretty smart often, don't I? I come in gen'lly right way, don't I? Why does that gal go totin' up in front of me to-day to see if you would see me, now?"

"Some mistake—eh?"

"Not a bit of it! Gal was all right, gal was. What I want to know is, what was up? Was you a practisin' any of your little hankey-pankeys with the pasteboards? Was you a bitin' in a double set of scrip of the new company to do your own riggin' of the market? Or was it a little bit of quiet con-nubiality with the mar-darm here in which you didn't want to be disturbed?"

Stewart Routh's face had been growing darker and darker as this speech proceeded, and at the allusion to his wife his lips began to move; but they were stopped by a warning pressure underneath the table from Harriet's foot.

"You're a queer fellow, Deane!" he said, in a subdued voice. "The fact is, we have a new servant here, and she did not recognise you as l'ami de la maison, and so stood on the proprieties, I suppose."

"Oh, that's it—eh? I don't know about the proprieties; but when the gal knows more of me, she'll guess I'm one of 'em. No-thing improper about me—no loafin' rowdy ways such as some of your friends have. Pay my way as I go, ask no favours, and don't expect none." He gave his trousers-pockets a ringing slap as he spoke, and looked round with a sneering laugh.

"There, there! It's all right; now sit down, and have a glass of wine, and tell us the news."

"No," he said, "thank'ee. I've been liquoring up in the City, where I've been doin' a little business—realising some of them Lake Eries and Michigans as I told you on. Spanking investments they were, and have turned up trumps."

"I hope you're in the hands of an honest broker," said Routh. "I could introduce you to one who——"

"Thank'ee, I have a great man to broke for me, recommended to me from t'other side by his cousin who leads Wall-street, New York City. I have given him the writings, and am going to see him on Tuesday, at two, when I shall trouser the dollars to the tune of fifteen thousand and odd, if markets hold up, I reckon."

"And you'll bring some of that to us in Tokenhouse-yard," said Routh, eagerly. "You recollect what I showed you, that I——"

"Oh yes!" said Deane, again with the sinister smile. "You could talk a 'coon's hind leg off, you could; Routh. But I shall just keep my dollars in my desk for a few days. Tokenhouse-yard can wait a little, can't it? just to see how things eventuate, you know."

"As you please," said Routh. "One thing is certain, Deane; you need no Mentor in your business, whatever you may do in your pleasures."

"Flatter myself, need none in neither," said the young man, with a baleful grin. "Eh, look here, now: talking of pleasures, come and dine with me on Friday at Barton's, at five. I've asked Dallas, and we'll have a night of it. Tuesday, the 17th, mind. Sorry to take your husband away, Mrs. R., but I'll make up for it some day. Perhaps you'll come and dine with me some day, Mrs. R., without R.?"

"Not I, Mr. Deane," said Harriet, with a laugh. "You're by far too dangerous a man."

Mr. Deane was gone; and again Stewart Routh sat over the table, scribbling figures on his blotting-pad.

"What are you doing, Stewart?"

"Five dollars to the pound—fifteen thousand," he said, "three thousand pounds! When did he say he would draw it?"

"On Tuesday, the—the day you dine with him."

"The day I dine with him! Keep it in his desk, he said, for a few days! He has grown very shy about Tokenhouse-yard. He hasn't been there for a week. The day I dine with him!" He had dropped his pen, and was slowly passing his hand over his chin.

"Stewart," said Harriet, going behind him and putting her arm round his neck—"Stewart, I know what thought you're busy with, but——"

"Do you, Harry?" said he, disengaging himself, but not unkindly—"do you? Then keep it to yourself, my girl, and get to bed. We must have that, Harry, in one way or another; we must have it."

She took up a candle, pressed her lips to his

forehead, and went to her room without a word. But for full ten minutes she remained standing before the dressing-table buried in thought, and again she muttered to herself: "A great risk! A great risk!"

ART WITH ITS WINGS ON.

I AM, sir, the identical sole and solitary Theodore, artist's model, as has already lucubriated in your eminently national journal. Again I take up my pen to throw off a few (lowly, but I trust not extreme) sentences reflecting on Park-lane, the railings of the same locality, the Row converging on the same location—by which expression signifying the Riot, not the Rotten—and the swiftest picter ever yet wafted (on the painter's own wings) to the utmost heights of the blue emporium, over and aloft our mortal sphere.

Who, sir, as like me, has nourished predilections for Park-lane's vicinity, will ever forget the foreboding day merged in dusky eve of July 23rd proximo, of the analg of Hyde Park? What I may think of Reform and its associates, is neither here nor there. That my leanings have ever tended to decorum, and the observance of fixed classes, so as to avert the wave which broke over France, when our enemies Queen was led to the stake with fires fermented by democratic fury, is not to be wondered at in one as for so many gay joyful years took his part in aristocracy's orbit—never having lived in untitled families. But I do not set myself up as politic—or seeing so far as them as sits in parliament, and contracts popular force by aid of the Radical newspapers. If so be their tenets is lower than my order thinks tasteful, who am I to sit and judge? Them as would, are as bad every inch, as the Pope. Implicitude is not a poor mortal's task; so long as thought soars in liberative freedom; for some will have their velvets, while lowlier portions of creation confine themselves within calico.

But points there are, with which those in the widest pale of reflective animosity must agree in taking a firm view of. Let us be Tories or Whigs, as persons have genteel tendencies, or otherwise vulgar. Some defends bribery as a fundament of our constitution. Mr. Clover, the quondam lord's butler, was such, and rattle his pockets, he would, when hustings and the pole, and treating voters with beer was discussed. Others may go the length of avowing woman's sex, capable to take open part in measures of legislation, even to sitting on the woollack. But truth before politeness, or the struggles of opposition, and nought save Party's phrensy would not coincide that Roughs is a bad lot, and no necessary evil—whether they throw stones, and dishivel property, and pick pockets, and employ agravating terms, be it on the blue side of the shield or the yellow one, or equal the green, which the Irish presume as Liberty's colour. Reform, if them as wants it can get, so let it be—but Roughianism to the winds, must every candid heart of Briton say.

And Roughianism—too sincerely prevalent on

many recent junctures, whether lashed up by inspectors or detectors, who shall say?—was predominate over Reform that July eve, as many a black eye and empty purse bitterly thought of the morrow, and how nobody could hear what the leaders of the populace exprest, I can asseverate from my own incapacity; also, a confusion above the left eye, and my hair watch-guard reft from me—last relict of better days—which had survived my watch, and was worn to keep up appearances. Howinnocent spectators, including the female sex—some of whom oviously as had babies in arms, and, as such, merely cared to see what was going on—were trampled, tossed to and fro like a field of corn, and betwixt the Roughians and the Reformiers, and the Police, and them prancing Life Guards on their chargers (always an object to the fair sex), did not know which way to run, and was knocked down among the broken rails, and otherwise molested, your confident eye-witness could swear in any court of offence. And raly, sir, was not these innoxious victims of innocent curiosity a fitter theme for official tears than the ill-bestowed folk, who came express to breed riotous plunder? such parties, as I have heard say, was absolutely befriended with fines, when they was convicted as due, on the subsequent morning. But truce to preamble. That I was on the spot, a helpless atom in that horrifying tornado, my aching bones and my left coat-tail ripped off, acwainted me for many a day, and self-examination resuming her throne, said, "Theodore, what business took you there?" No more Reform and Roughian meetings for me, take my word for the tickit.

Judge, sir, if my pulse did not bound, when a recent paragraph greeted my eye, which spoke to my bruised spirit like the benignant halcion of a more propitious era. The want of a reader, with dramatical elements, was proclaimed, who was publicly to anilize and exhibit the pictorial world's wonder, the graphic record—executed against time and over and above truth—of the conflict of the Roughs and the Reformiers with the blotted aristocracy and their mermaidens A. B. C., and respective police divisions of the alphabet, in which I had born so sad momentous a role. "Theodore," said I (hope springing eternal within me), "it was not for nothing as you haunted the Park that 23rd of July proximo."

Who, sir, would not thrill, on reading the advertised description of the Riot in Hyde Park, "painted against time, by" (according to the press) "the swiftest painter of the age," which proceeded the calls for a compentent first-class reader? "Theodore, albeit," said I, made eager by sapient experience to bridal Hope's soaring delusions, "one must allow for self-praise and devotion to art, which is only so much human vanity—but I never heard speak of Rafel, or Sir Joseph, as painted the Rake a la Mode, or even Mr. Bloxome, over his Disabedient Propolit, putting themselves in print as violent as was here transacted. All is not gold as glitters," and so I reigned in my transported feelings, and, with a calm yet throbbing step, mounted the stairs of

the Pantheon, among them lot of—well, if I said they was daubs, the majority, it would be no label. But distances figures by comparison. Them pictures as I took for foils as going in, on issuing out assumed a importience rally wonderful to relate; and to warn other candidatal readers, I can make a *terra firma* affidavit that “the Great Picture,” save for the treatise in the papers, which had beguiled my hopes, was not worth threepence or the new nectie I had started—as due to the occasion.

To begin with the simfony, as we say at the opera. “In order,” says the program, “to combine classic beauty, pictorially, with those passions that deeply stir the human heart, the artist elected to take the Marble Arch for the centre of the Picture, reserving a large foreground for the ample display of the main incidents of that extraordinary scene, including all kinds of combats—the removal of the wounded—picking pockets, nigger minstrels fighting the police, and various comic incidents. In the middle distance the mass of people rush into the Park with banners, breaking down the railings from Park-lane, after forcing one of the gates with a lamp-post. Sir Richard Mayne in the centre, on a white horse, accompanied by the Hon. Mr. Walpole and Captain Harris, points with his finger, and the police charge vigorously both in solid column and irregular bodies, occasionally dealing a side blow on some straggler with a brickbat in his hand. The crowd receive them with a terrific shower of bricks, stones, bottles,” &c.

Sir, I looked my eyes out of my head, like Cœlebs in search of the pictoral classic beauty, to which Truth fell a victim. Now *was* the central gate of the Marble Arch forced? correspondents may enquire. And *did* Sir Richard pint with his finger in *Mr. Walpole's* society on horseback? And as the bill later aservered, *was* Lord Shaftsbury, and other popalous benefactors of the aristocracy a-riding that way, to inspirit the Roughts by enjoying the turbalent scene? There *was* a precious lot of comedy—so be out-of-the-way drawing is such. And if the police in the picture was not figures of fun—hoping, cropping, dropping, stopping (see, valued sir, how I dividges natural into rime), tumbling upside down—and assuming other dramatical pripenisities, mostly like the letter Q in a child's copy-book gone mad, I never see a symptom of drollery, even in Punch. I am familiar with well-disposed men as cuts horses, and Bengal tigers, and other specimens of animal humanity, and Shems with partnors, gratis, for Noah's Arks; so yet that their quadrapeds, though not paradoed for the Times, by Mr. Sprat and Mr. Cremer, and other propitior of juvenile sports, have sufficed the living models in this great picture, I am prepared to deposit in any court of justice.

Then as how to continue the quotatious self-praise, and description of matters as hardly never occurred or transpirated, follows underwise:

“The Duke of Sutherland leads a policeman into the porter's lodge, who has received a fearful wound on the head.”

But, lord, sir, his Grace, in place of being prostrate or profil, or even his beloved public back, is a mere white coat on the rear, and, if so be the cheapest of raps as is ready made, in point of apparel, I would have declined it as a misfit, in the days of the golden past.

Lastly, we was promised “with his arm round the identical chimney, taking notes, the clever ‘correspondent’ of the Times.”

Sir, I may have valeted that gentleman or the reverse, and I may know his tricks and manners, as Sir Cristopher Wren's granddaughter has exprest herself elsewhere in fictitious parlance; but I will deposit, as a loyal subject, that I neither was aware of correspondent, still less chimney, on the occasion of viewing the Great Picture.

A NEW VIEW OF AN OLD RIOT.

I HAVE a few remarks to make on a very old event, which I believe are entirely new, and which, though the event is of anything but world-wide importance, will not, I trust, be found wholly without interest.

The event is the attack made by the London ‘Prentices on the Cockpit Theatre in the years 1616-17; the remarks will be on the motive of that attack, which have never, in my opinion, been exactly hit upon, though the signs of its existence lie on the very surface of the story.

As everybody does not read Mr. Payne Collier's *Annals of the Stage*, and works of that description, I must briefly describe the event, at the risk of fatiguing the more erudite reader.

On Shrove Tuesday, then, in the year before mentioned, a mob, headed by apprentices, made an attack on the Cockpit Theatre, in Drury-lane, which had been either recently built, or recently converted from a cockpit into a play-house, and which was occupied by a company of actors who had previously played at the Red Bull, and were called, in reference to Queen Anne (of Denmark), the “Queen's servants.” According to Camden, they pulled the house down and destroyed the “apparatus”—that is to say, the wardrobe and properties; and, although the venerable historian seems rather to have mistaken the will for the deed, as far as the demolition of the house is concerned, there is no doubt that they did considerable damage, and, at all events, destroyed doors, windows, dresses, and play-books.

The details of the exploit are described in a contemporary ballad written in praise of the apprentices, especially Thomas Brent and John Cory, who were evidently leaders on the occasion. Of this ballad, which was first brought to light by Mr. Payne Collier, I give an expurgated edition, without apology, as it will prove more amusing than my lucubrations:

The ‘Prentices of London long
Have famous been in story,
But now they are exceeding all
Their chronicles of glory:
Look back, some say, to other day,
But I say look before ye,
And see the deed they now have done,
Tom Brent and Johnny Cory.

Tom Brent said then to his merry men,
 "Now, whoop, my men, and hollow,
 And to the Cockpit let us go,
 I'll lead you like brave Rollo."
 Then Johnny Cory answered straight,
 In words much like Apollo:
 "Lead, Tommy Brent, incontinent,
 And we'll be sure to follow."

Three score of these brave 'Prentices,
 All fit for works of wonder,
 Rush'd down the plain of Drury-lane
 Like lightning and like thunder.
 And then each door with hundreds more,
 And windows burst asunder;
 And to the tire-house broke they in,
 Which some began to plunder.

"Now hold your hands, my merry men,"
 Said Tom, "for I assure you
 Whoso begin to steal shall win
 Me both for judge and jury,
 And eke for executioner,
 Within this lane of Drury;
 But tear and rend, I'll stand your friend,
 And will uphold your fury."

King Priam's robes were soon in rags,
 And broke his gilded sceptre;
 False Cressid's hood, that was so good,
 When loving Troilus kept her.

* * * * *
 Had Theseus seen them use his queen
 So ill, he had bewept her.

Books old and young on heap they flung,
 And burn'd them in the blazes,
 Tom Dekker, Haywood, Middleton,
 And other wand'ring crazies:
 Poor Day that day not scap'd away,
 And what still more amazes,
 Immortal Cracke was burn'd all black,
 Which ev'rybody praises.

Now sing we loud with one accord,
 To these most *dignæ laude*,

* * * * *
 And praise we these bold 'Prentices,
 Cum voce et cum corde.

Before dismissing the ballad, I may observe that King Priam and Cressida were possibly the characters of that name in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, possibly belonged to some other play, as this was the property of the "King's servants," who acted at the Blackfriars and the Globe, that Theseus was probably the character of that name in Hayward's *Silver Age*, and that the immortal and universally praised Cracke is so far shorn of immortality, that nobody at present knows whether the name refers to a man or a play. These observations are not mine but Mr. Collins's, but I take leave to confirm his theory respecting the *Silver Age*, by calling attention to the fact, that Thomas Hayward was one of "Queen Anne's servants," and to suggest that we have a right to infer from the context, that the mysterious Cracke was not a tragedy, but a dramatic poet. Day, I may add, wrote several plays, that have not, I think, been reprinted since their first publication, and seems to have been famous for "bilking" his landlord. In the last verse, which, for the sake of decorum, I have so grievously shorn of its dimensions, theatres and immorality

are associated together, and people are advised to thrust plays and bad company out of doors. When I have added that some of the rioters were severely punished, and that, after a short interval, the "Queen's servants" were again performing at the Cockpit, I have concluded the entire story.

Now, according to the view commonly taken of this little disturbance, so disgraceful in the opinion of some, so glorious in the opinion of others, the riotous apprentices were representatives of the puritanical feeling which was so prevalent in the City during the whole of the seventeenth century, and which, even in the sixteenth, had been manifested by a strong hostility towards theatrical amusements. Partly animated by a spirit of what our cousins call "rowdiness," but powerfully influenced by a conviction that theatres were unfavourable to morality, these noisy zealots, availing themselves of a licence long conceded to their order on Shrove Tuesday, attempted to demolish the new theatre in Drury-lane. This is evidently the view which the writer of the ballad intends his readers to take; but it is equally evident, that if by his last verse he wishes to shed a puritanic halo round an outbreak of blackguardism, he is himself no Puritan. He has at his fingers' end the names of the leading dramatists; indeed, he makes one's mouth water when he shows how well he is acquainted with the once immortal but now exceedingly defunct Cracke; he can compare Tom Brent to Rollo, the principal character in Fletcher's *Bloody Brother*, and he knows how various parts are dressed. The whole ballad, indeed, breathes a roystering spirit, which savours much more of the factious man-about-town than of the religious zealot.

What is there in the riot itself that denotes a puritanical movement? There were other theatres open beside the Cockpit, and a mob determined to extinguish the drama would rather have directed their efforts against the Blackfriars, which was the very head-quarters of the enemy, the house at which the works of Shakespeare and other poets of the highest repute were produced. The Cockpit, after all, enjoyed but a Brummagem sort of gentility, and could scarcely be regarded as a representative establishment. The consideration of these facts leads me to the supposition that the Cockpit was punished for certain sins of its own, and not merely because it was a place devoted to theatrical amusements.

Let me digress a little. It is well known that in the early days of the English stage, theatres were divided into "public" and "private." An exhaustive definition of these terms has not yet been obtained. We are certain that the so-called "private" theatres were not inaccessible to the public, like those attached to a gentleman's mansion; but it may be generally laid down that a system of exclusiveness belonging to one class of theatre distinguished it from the other. Without going through the seven marks of distinction deduced by Mr. Collier from various authorities, we may confine our attention to the facts that the

"private" theatres were entirely roofed in from the weather, and had pits furnished with seats, whereas the area of the "public" theatre consisted of a yard, in which the spectator stood, and which was exposed to the weather, the roof only protecting the boxes, and that even with respect to the boxes, there was this distinction, that at the "private" theatres there were private boxes in the modern sense of the word, whereas at the "public" theatres there was nothing of the sort. That the "private" theatres were intended for the recreation of a higher, more luxurious, and more refined class than the public, there is no doubt. The three "private" houses in the olden time were the Blackfriars, the Cockpit, and a theatre in Salisbury-court; all the rest appear to have been "public." Of these the Globe, situated on the Surrey side of the water, belonged, as well as the Blackfriars, to the King's servants, who used it during the summer. Probably, therefore, the rank of the Globe was higher than that of the other "public" theatres; but, at the same time, we may suppose that the King's servants valued their summer less than their winter audiences, and that when they crossed the water they somewhat resembled the tragic "stars" of modern times, who, when the central theatres are closed, condescend to play in the remote suburbs.

Though they then seem to have no cheap galleries, we may infer from Hamlet's advice to the players, that the occupants of the area constituted the lowest section of the theatrical public; but I have sometimes felt puzzled when I heard the Prince tell of the "periwig-pated fellow who could split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb show and noise." The subjects of Queen Victoria are less turbulent than those of Queen Elizabeth or King James, but I question whether the humbler section of a modern audience would sit patiently while one of the personages on the stage, speaking words intended to be wise, went on saying to another, "This would do very well for the roughs in the gallery, who like nothing but trash and rant, but when you come to the educated ladies and gentlemen in the stalls, that is another affair." Why, on the first day of the performance of Hamlet, did the "groundlings" consent to be so unceremoniously rated? Let us suppose that the word "groundling" only referred to the standing spectator of the area of a "public" theatre, and could not be applied to the seated occupant of the pit of the Blackfriars, where the play was produced, and the difficulty vanishes at once. This hypothesis, of course, implies that the two kinds of theatre belonged to totally different strata of society.

To return to our "riot." It is very clear that even among the "public" houses, the Red Bull, which stood at the upper end of St. John-street, Clerkenwell, did not stand in high repute. It was decidedly an unfashionable house, and at the beginning of the reign of James the First, its patrons were recreated by the performances of the "Queen's servants." But

shortly after the completion of the Cockpit, these same "Queen's servants" migrated to Drury-lane, and acted in the new house. This connexion between the Red Bull and the Cockpit seems to have been long maintained, and as late as 1630 we find the performers at both mentioned as belonging to the same order of badness.

Now the Cockpit, as we have seen, was a "private" theatre, with all the exclusiveness proper to such establishments. This fact held fast, we come, I think, to the real cause of the "riot." The "groundlings" and other "roughs" of the Red Bull, regarding themselves as the natural patrons of "Queen Anne's servants," who were not a bit too good for them, follow their inconstant favourites to a more fashionable house, and find themselves encountered by a system of high prices, private boxes, and "exclusions" of every sort. Under these irritating circumstances a feeling is generated, which consists partly of that spirit of class hatred which was manifested some years since at New York, during the engagement of Mr. Macready, and was partly a demonstration against the "Upper Ten," partly by that dislike of advanced prices which distinguished the O. P. riots of Covent Garden in 1809. Puritanical prejudice, implying an abhorrence of the actor's profession, might possibly have had some influence, by giving a sort of sanction to the outrage, just as the rowdies of New York might have fancied themselves actuated by a patriotic feeling, when assailing an English actor, who seemed to interfere with a native favourite. But the puritanical element, if it had any influence at all, was merely subordinate. The aristocratic "King's servants," who played at the Blackfriars, and were the real representatives of the drama, were not attacked, because they had done nothing to offend the London mob. "Queen Anne's servants," as renegade pets of the democracy, had offended the mob grievously, and therefore were marked out for destruction.

A BOTANIST'S ADVENTURE.

WHEN I was twenty, botany was my passion. Indeed, I am not sure that I am cured of it yet. I never sit in a railway carriage and feel myself borne at fierce express speed through a green landscape without remembering regretfully those days when I lingered on the wild mountain-side, or plunged, eager and ardent as a knight of romance, into the depths of the forest. His quest was beauty in distress to deliver, or mighty Paynim giant to lay low; mine was to discover some fair flower sleeping in the shade of ancient trees, or to snatch some cruel poisonous weed from its lair. The knight was a happy knight, I have no doubt; but I do not think he could be a happier man than John Graves, your humble servant.

France was the scene of my chief exploits in those days. My father had left England for economy's sake, and settled at some distance from Paris. The country around our home was not interesting, botanically speaking; and I was in

the habit of taking long and solitary excursions. During one of these I met with an adventure.

I had spent the morning on the skirt of a forest. Towards noon I entered it, rested awhile, then started again. Ere long I came to a spot where many avenues—seven, I believe—met, and whence they radiated like the points of a star. In the middle of this open space rose a tall and slender pyramid, with a gilt ball on the top. This was the very heart of the forest. Not a soul was visible; not a stately deer or a frightened hare disturbed the silence of the spot. The solemn trees rose around me, leaving a circular roof of sky above, then they divided into their long seven lonely alleys. It was grand and very fine, but it was also very depressing. I sat down on the lowest of the three steps, above which rose the pyramid, a picture of the past flitting before me.

Here, if tradition spoke true, often came that gay hunter, Francis the First, and after him his son Henri, both with the same lady huntress. Perhaps she was only a sort of prime minister after all, as some historians declare. Tastes vary so. Some kings like a pale Cardinal de Richelieu, and others (like these two) a Diana of Poitiers, fair-haired and blue-eyed, who, if she now and then sat to Primaticcio as the goddess Flora, also caused that haughty medal to be struck, in which she appears trampling Love under her feet, with the imperious motto, "I have conquered the conqueror of all." But, oh! what din, what tumult, what halloing of hounds and trampling of horses there was in those days, and how sadly quiet these good people were all now. Ages pass, and Diana is replaced by Fontanges, who ties up her hair with a wonderful ribbon that sends the world mad, or we see that pretty Madame d'Etiolles in this very forest lying in wait for a king's heart, and dying later—rare honour!—in Versailles, under the name of Madame de Pompadour; but other variety we must not expect.

I got tired of these phantoms as I sat thus at the base of the pyramid. I got tired, too, of those endless avenues stretching for ever away before me; so I rose and struck into one, walking fast, yet glancing right and left in search of botanical treasures. I found none, but saw a strange abundance of a pale variety of the *Solanum* tribe. I gathered a bunch, then a few ferns, and, wearied with my profitless day, I quickened my pace, to get out of the forest before nightfall.

I must have been very near the outskirt when my adventure began. I saw nothing, but I heard, in a thicket on my right hand, a low, plaintive, and not unmelodious whistle. I stood still to listen, and it ceased. Presently it was repeated, and something gliding in the grass near me made it move and rustle. I looked, but the creature, if it were one, was already gone. The whistle sounded again, but at some distance from me; and further away, too, the motion I had already perceived was repeated. It was too dark already for me to distinguish more than

that motion of the grass, and it told me nothing. Again the whistle was renewed, but so far away or so faintly that I could scarcely hear it. Then it ceased, or I heard it no more.

I was perplexed. I had seen nothing, neither human being, nor beast, nor bird. The trees were scarce, the thickets were stunted, the grass was poor and thin, and a few moss-covered rocks which were scattered about were too low to conceal even a child. Yet some one had been near me, and something had passed within my reach, which was not, however, within my knowledge. I was armed with a stout stick. I beat the bushes, and only startled a little harmless bird from its nest. I went round the rocks to explore them, and found a few mosses, which I put in my tin box; and this was the sole result of my quest. It was useless to pursue it; the greyiness of evening was stealing on me fast, and the country before me looked flat and desolate.

I am not sure that I ought to go on, and tell the reader what follows. I have called it an adventure, and many will think that it scarcely deserves the name. But I believe that adventures are half the time productions of our own mood. I believe they spring from something within us, which, if I may so speak, calls them into existence, as the voice of the enchanter wakens spirits in the old tales of sorcery. Some people cannot have adventures—there is no sympathy between the spirit of adventure and them; and others cannot stir but, lo! some adventure starts up, like the little wicked diabolin in the French toy. I belong to neither class, and have neither more nor less than my share of this doubtful commodity; but the adventurous mood was on me this day, and would not let me rest.

I walked on, only thinking of reaching some village by nightfall, when I heard again the low whistle I had heard in the forest. This time it came from some distance, and it stole so faintly over the silent plain that, but for the evening stillness, I could not have heard it at all. I saw no one, but a low hedge which straggled through the fields might conceal a man easily. I was walking in the opposite direction to this. I altered my course at once. I soon reached the hedge, but saw no token of the whistler; no great marvel after all. The path in which I now found myself was a narrow winding one, which dived down to a little valley. Here, as I soon perceived, clustered a few houses, where lights were already twinkling like mild glowworms.

The first of these houses I entered. The door was open, so I was spared the trouble of knocking. In my best French I bade its tenant a good evening, and asked for a drink, and the way to an inn, if such a thing was to be found in the vicinity. A man looked up from the fireplace, where he was stirring something in an iron pot. He returned my salutation, and civilly replied that I could have a drink of milk if I pleased, and that the nearest inn was a league off. I was tired to death, and asked if I might rest awhile.

"Certainly, sir," replied the man, rising to

hand me a rush-bottomed stool. "Would you like some bread with your milk? You seem fatigued."

I thankfully accepted.

"Prudence," he said, raising his voice, "give some milk to monsieur."

The door of an inner room opened, and Prudence came forth, bearing a tin candlestick with a flaring tallow candle in it. The man was a common peasant, tanned, red-cheeked, coarse, and good-humoured looking. I saw dozens such daily; but his wife was wholly unlike him, unlike any woman I had ever seen. She was middle-sized, but so slender that she looked tall. She wore a close black jacket and dark petticoat, that left her feet and ankles bare. They were small and well made, so were her hands. Her neck, too, was long and slender, without being thin; her head was remarkably small, but flat and not well shaped. Her face was narrow and very sallow, with thin mobile features, and the strangest little glittering brown eyes. She had black hair, and wore no cap, and though by no means ugly, she was, to me at least, a very repelling-looking person.

"Milk," she answered; "certainly."

She put down her light, fetched a tin can from a shelf, and filling a coarse crockery cup with rich-looking milk, she handed it to me. Her motions were graceful, and her smile and look meant to be courteous; but I had something to do, not to betray my instinctive horror of this woman. I thanked her as graciously as I could, and praised her cow. She smiled (her smile only made matters worse), and said:

"I have no cow—we are too poor for that."

"I walk a league every day for that milk," put in the husband, who was still stirring the contents of the iron pot on the fire. "Give the loaf to monsieur, Prudence."

She obeyed, and I remarked:

"You are fond of milk?"

"We never drink any," she replied, smiling again; "we are too poor."

I did not think it civil to ask what Madame Prudence did with the contents of the tin can—a large one—since she could not afford to drink milk; so I ate and drank in silence.

I hoped to leave the cottage as soon as I had done, and reach the inn which the man had mentioned; but it was not to be. A sudden flash of light filled the room, then a loud thunder-peal followed, and after it came a fierce rush of rain. The man crossed himself; and Prudence coolly went and shut the door behind me. It was a terrible storm, a fierce and a long one. The thunder rolled and rolled, and the rain poured and poured, and Prudence and her husband sat down to their plateful of soup each, and went through it with perfect equanimity, whilst I walked up and down the room in silent vexation. I do not know, indeed, why I was so vexed at this trifling delay; I half fancy it was because of the little restless eyes of Prudence. I tried to avoid them, but could not. Wherever I went, they seemed to follow me; and as she sat with

her back to the wall, it was impossible to shun them by getting behind her.

The storm did not cease, or even grow less, and Prudence said, very civilly:

"Perhaps monsieur would like to spend the night here? I can go and sleep with a neighbour, and make up a bed for my husband in this room. Our bed is a good one."

"Thank you," I replied, hurriedly; "I must go on."

"Monsieur can scarcely go on to-night," replied Prudence, with her smile; "there is no inn within a league; the way to it is across the country, and the men about here are too great poltroons to show monsieur the way in such a storm as this."

The latter remark was uttered with a quick scornful glance at her husband, who sullenly muttered something about not being afraid, but did not volunteer to be my guide.

I had no alternative. It was getting late. I had no right to intrude any longer on these people unless I accepted their offer, and, in spite of the eyes of Prudence, I did accept it. She rose and went into the inner room to prepare it for me. It was a relief to think that I should soon be out of her sight. In the mean while I tried to get some desultory information from her husband, but his plateful of soup had made him sleepy, and, as nature had also made him stupid, I soon gave him up. Before long, Prudence came out, and, with her smile, informed monsieur that everything was ready. Monsieur took the candlestick from her hand, and, muttering ungracious thanks, entered his apartment.

My first care was to fasten the door, but, as there was no lock to it, I had to barricade it. Two chairs and a table did the thing. I protest that I apprehended no personal danger; I only feared that Prudence would come in and look at me. It was not likely she would do so; she was not to sleep in the cottage; besides, the temptation of seeing me in my slumbers, with a handkerchief tied round my head, might not be irresistible; but fear and reason have nothing in common, and fear, being strong, prevailed and had her way. My room, though small, was clean, and the bed justified Prudence's eulogium. It was a very good bed indeed. I was tired, and I was young. In five minutes I was fast asleep.

Heaven save my worst enemy from such slumbers, or rather from such dreams, as I had! The whole night long, Prudence and I were striving for mastery, and every time we engaged in combat she prevailed against me. We never came to blows, but it was a fell and cruel struggle for all that. When I tried to strike her, she laughed, and my hand fell back powerless; then with her supple and nervous arms, strong as steel, she would embrace me, and tighten her hold, and look at me with a smile, until I shrieked with terror, and asked for mercy—which I never got. I do not know how the fight ended, but it began again and again, without a particle of variety. I believe this dreadful monotony wearied me as much as the struggle itself. I know that

when I woke I was in a profuse perspiration. The greyness of early morning stole in through my little window. I saw the whitewashed walls adorned with a few prints, devotional or warlike, but nailed in the plaster, and frameless. This was the only bit of feminine embellishment—and it might as well have come from the husband as from Prudence—which betrayed the presence of a woman. There was no pincushion on the chest of drawers, and no flower-pot outside the window; everything was cold, bare, and comfortless-looking. It was rather ungracious in me to be thus criticising Prudence's domestic arrangements, whilst I was lying in her bed; but I owed her a grudge for the night she had given me, and I went on commenting without scruple. Ere long I paused. I stared, and could not believe what I saw to be real; and yet, if seeing be believing, I was not deceived. At the foot of the bed, strung on a slender reed like her-rings, I saw a row of black vipers. The reed itself was fastened to two nails in the wall.

I have a horror of serpents; the sight of them alone is hateful to me. I sprung out of bed, I bundled on a few clothes, I kicked the chairs away from the door, and entered the kitchen in a passion.

"What do you mean by poisoning me with those abominable reptiles?" I asked of the man, who was already up and busy. "How dare you make me sleep in a room with a set of vipers?"

I so startled him that, in his confusion, the poor fellow dropped my tin box, which he had been examining.

"They are dead, sir," he said, apologetically.

This exasperated me.

"Of course they are dead. A pretty thing if they were alive and crawling!"

"They would bite you if they were alive, sir," he replied.

The fellow's incorrigible stupidity calmed me. It was useless to argue, and I wanted to know why those abominable creatures were there. I put the question to him.

"We always keep them there, lest any one should come and steal them," he replied; "they are worth ten sous apiece now."

I began to understand the facts of the case. These people killed vipers, and got the government reward for doing so.

"You pursue a dangerous trade, my good fellow," I said; "be careful."

"It is Prudence who does it; she has the secret, only she will not tell it to me. I have begged and prayed for it again and again, but she will not give it to me. She says two cannot have it, for if two had it, it would kill her. Now, you know, that is hard upon me," he continued, "for suppose she dies. I am left destitute."

"And have you no idea how she does it?" I asked.

"I know she takes milk out with her, and I have heard her whistle; and once I came home unexpectedly, and I caught her making a sort of tisane, and—monsieur may believe me—she was

boiling her pot on the fire yonder, and threw in handfuls of that very herb monsieur has got there."

He pointed to the contents of my tin box. I took the withered herbs.

"That," I said, "is the——"

I had no time to end the sentence. A hand snatched the weeds from mine, and Prudence thrust her face between us.

"Monster! Devil!" she shrieked. "Do you want to kill me?—to kill me?"

She was in a frightful rage, but her pale face was not disturbed; it was the face I had seen all night—cruel, relentless, abhorrent—to me, at least—but not otherwise altered. It was her husband whom she addressed, and he slunk away like a detected hound. His wife's anger was as brief as it was violent; she gave him a look of contempt, then turned to me smiling.

"Has monsieur slept well, and will he have any breakfast?" she asked, smoothly. "We shall soon have beautiful milk."

Now, it was prejudice, of course, but I could not make up my mind to drink milk in Prudence's house; it would have tasted "viperish" to me, though the cow that gave it had been the fair Io herself. I declined Prudence's courtesy with brief thanks, entered my room, and finished dressing. Within five minutes I had paid my bill, and was on my road to the inn in the next village, with Prudence's husband as my guide. I did not need his services, but I could see the poor wretch wanted to get away from his wife, whose eye, when it fell upon him, took a particularly evil expression; moreover, I was not sorry to have a chat with him. I had no need to draw him out; he was fasting and lively now; besides, he wanted to explain why Prudence had got into such a passion, or rather why he had submitted to her fury so patiently. "You see, sir," he said, "she is a good girl, is Prudence—a little quick at times, but a good girl; and then she was a good match for me. The secret has been in her family for more than a hundred years; it has gone down from father to son, or to daughter, as the case might be, and all these girls have been sought after and have made good matches, whereas I had not a far-thing."

"How came she to marry you?" I asked.

He looked at me and smiled.

"She could not help herself, sir; she was fond of me, you see."

"Why will she not tell you the secret? You could both go hunting and catching vipers."

Prudence's husband looked ill used.

"She will not," he said, sullenly. "She says that if it were known to more than one person at a time, the vipers would bite her and kill her. Now, that is an idea, as I tell her."

Every one has an idea in France, so I was not surprised at this remark of Prudence's husband, but I was surprised by what he told me. Did Prudence really believe that the revelation of her secret would destroy her power?

"Did not monsieur see and hear her? Did she not call me a monster, a devil, and ask if I wanted to kill her, and all because I had that bit of herb in my hand? But I have more of it," he added, nodding shrewdly, "and I will make the tisane when she is out. I will! You see, monsieur, it is a hard case. Prudence had the secret from her mother on her death-bed, and she had it from her father in the same way; but suppose Prudence dies suddenly. She cannot give it to me in that case, and there I am!"

"Then she has promised to tell it to you on her death-bed?"

"To be sure she has; I would not have married her without. But, as I said; suppose she dies suddenly?"

"Perhaps there is no secret," I suggested, sceptically.

"Oh yes there is. Prudence never meddled with vipers before her mother died, though she always had a serpent or two about her."

"A serpent! And about her?"

"Yes, sir; she liked the creatures; she used to have them coiled round her body to keep her cool in hot weather, she said; and when she was a girl, and frolicsome, she would run after the other girls with a pet snake she had, and frighten them. She was very fond of it, but it vexed her one day, and she killed it."

"Did she ever make a pet of a viper?"

"No, she is afraid of vipers," he replied, confidentially; "but she sometimes kills six in a day, and they are worth ten sous apiece now. It is hard that she will not tell me the secret."

I comforted him with a franc, which I slipped into his hand as we at length reached the inn and parted company. "Now," I thought, as I sat down to a decent cup of coffee with no viper associations about it, "who says the middle ages are dead? Here is a mediæval state of things. This woman believes in her charm, whatever it may be, and goes forth to meet the viper, with the faith of a hero wearing enchanted armour. Take that faith away, and her natural fear comes on and masters her. And yet how suited she is to that occupation such as it is!—she is a feminine viper. She has the creature's serpentine grace, and its deadly look. I have no doubt that it feels an affinity towards her, and goes to its perdition with a kind of pleasure. She whistles, and it comes; she feeds it, and it drinks; when it is stupefied and torpid, I suppose she coolly kills it, puts it on a hank, brings it home, and thereby earns ten sous. Yet this creature could feel love, and could bestow her regard on that brutish lump, her husband, who is only contemplating the possibility of her sudden death, and the pecuniary loss such a calamity could entail upon him."

A pretty servant-girl was waiting upon me. She had a frank communicative face; and as soon as I had opened my lips to say at whose house I had passed the night, she was ready, good soul, with a torrent of words.

"Ah! good heavens, she would not have slept

at Prudence's for the whole world. The woman dealt in witchcraft, else how could she talk to vipers and make them dance around her, then kill and sell them for twelve sous apiece?"

"Ten," I corrected; "and the vipers do not dance, mademoiselle."

"I beg monsieur's pardon. My own great-aunt saw them dancing around Prudence's grandfather, and of course they do the same now."

I suggested that these were degenerate days, and that vipers might have lost their ancient gift; but I was not heeded.

"It was witchcraft. Prudence took a drink which made the vipers come when she breathed upon them. But see you; that same drink made her sallow, and Prudence was never in good health. It would not end well. Prudence had gone mad about her husband, and forced him to marry her, when she might have had a much better match in my informant's own uncle. But it would not end well. Mathieu" (I now learned his name) "would have no peace till he found out the secret. Once he discovered it, the vipers could set upon Prudence and bite and kill her."

The topic of Prudence having been fully exhausted by the time I had despatched my first course, I ordered a second, and turned to the more congenial theme, botany. I did not utter that barbarous word; but I inquired if dusty gentlemen, who had evidently seen some hard work, wandered about the country gathering weeds, which they safely stowed away in tin boxes.

"Oh yes!" was the eager reply, "I have seen them. Does monsieur know what they do with those weeds?"

I shook my head in solemn mystery.

"I suppose they sell them," said my pretty waitress, looking pensive; "they cannot fetch much."

"Less than vipers, I assure you; but what direction do those poor fellows usually take?"

The explanation which followed was a tedious one, and is not worth repeating. Suffice it that I left the inn an hour after this, and that I struck into a path which was to conduct me to the other end of the forest which I had explored on the preceding day.

The day was burning hot; the forest was oppressively close; but my tin box overflowed with some of the choicest plants I had ever found. It was a glorious day. I felt exultant and happy. I forgot fatigue, hunger, and thirst; but I also forgot the directions the pretty girl at the inn had given me, and the consequence was that I got lost in the forest. Now, this was not pleasant. The day was well-nigh spent, and even Prudence's bed would have been a more acceptable couch than the bare earth at the root of a tree. Better dead vipers on a hank, than live vipers at liberty. I had read that the viper is a slandered animal, which never attacks man; but just then my faith in such general maxims was loose. I remembered the seven avenues I had seen on the preceding day, and I wondered if I

could not find one of them, and thence the central pyramid. Give me that, and certain landmarks I recollected, would take me back to the village in which Prudence dwelt. Now, according to all the rules of romance, I ought to have wandered up and down the forest all night, and never found the pyramid. But these rules were reversed in the present instance. The first path I took led me to one of the seven avenues, and far away from me, indeed, but quite distinct, I saw the pyramid and its gilt ball glittering in the light of the setting sun. I took heart and walked fast, and reached it. But before I started on my next expedition I sat down at the foot of the pyramid, and rested a few moments. It was a divine evening. The long low rays of the sinking sun poured from the west down one of the avenues; fire and gold are nothing to the splendour which swept along the green earth up the old trunks of trees, and reached their topmost boughs in the rosiest hues. It was a magnificent spectacle; but I looked at my watch, and rose. I turned round the pyramid, then stood still. A woman was lying on the earth at my feet.

Asleep? I stooped; her eyes were fixed and open; her lips had parted in the gasp of her last agony; her face was livid. I knew it. This was the face of Prudence, the serpent-charmer, the viper-killer. She was dead. I took her swollen hand, with the marks of a fatal sting on it still; when I dropped it, it fell back loosely, with that inert weight which tells so much. She was dead—the woman whom I had seen all life and fury in the morning, and the red sunlight swept across her rigid face, and only seemed to render its sternness more apparent. How had it happened? Had she been surprised? Had she struggled with her enemy, as I had striven against her all night in my dreams? One thing I felt sure of; she had not been stung here. The fatal bite had been inflicted in some remote spot, whence she had crept to this; then the venom had seized her heart, till sight first, then life, had failed her. Remedies, if applied in time, might have saved her; but there had been no one at hand to give them. Exhaustion, the intense heat of the day, and something too, perhaps, in her own constitution, had quickened the action of the poison, and brought on this unusually sudden termination.

I stood and looked at her in a stupor. She lay on the very spot where I had sat twenty-four hours before, thinking of Diana of Poitiers and numerous dead men and women. And she, one of those strange links which connect the present and the past, had gone to join them. Some ancestor of hers had been a viper-charmer in those days, and had, maybe, exhibited his skill in the royal presence, whilst another charmer looked haughtily on, conscious of equal power.

I left her there at the foot of the pyramid, on the cold earth, in the gathering darkness of evening, and I walked as fast as I could to the cottage I had left that morning. Save that no low whistle came stealing over the plain, every-

thing looked as it had looked on the previous evening. When I pushed open the door of Prudence's cottage, I again found her husband busy at the hearth cooking in the iron pot.

"Many vipers, Prudence?" he asked, without looking up.

"It is not Prudence," I said.

He turned round with a start, and knew me at once. He rose in sudden excitement.

"Monsieur, monsieur," he said, "you must tell me where you found that herb. It is the herb. I made the tisané to-day, and I have tasted Prudence's once, and it is the same; for—look!"

He went to the inner room, and came out with a dead viper two feet long.

"You killed that!" I said.

He nodded; then added, "I do not mean to tell Prudence just yet. She would be jealous; besides, I want to show her that two *can* have the secret."

How I broke the news I cannot remember; but the final words came out:

"Your wife is lying dead in the forest."

I had no need to add, "a viper has stung her." He knew it. He sank down on his stool, stared wildly, and, throwing up his hands, said:

"Ah, Heaven! 'Then it was true!'"

This, and no more, was my adventure.

Two years later, indeed, I paid another visit to the forest, and met Mathieu. His right arm was in a sling, and with his left hand he was gathering dried sticks and withered boughs. He complained bitterly of his poverty. "Then you have not taken to viper-killing?" I said.

He shook his head gloomily.

"It cannot be done without the secret, and two cannot use it and live."

"But you need not tell it to any one."

He looked slyly at me; and his look said: "She did not tell me, and yet I found it out." My impression is, that Mathieu feared I should take to viper-killing.

A word of warning. Some imprudent reader may, fancying that the Solanum I have alluded to was the herb used by Mathieu, be tempted to try it. To that reader I say, it was not the herb.

OUR LENGTHENING DAY.

THE lengthening day of spring, ladies and gentlemen, has often been compared to the smile of nature. The face of earth becomes more expansive, beaming with brightness, and wreathed with dimples. The fields laugh, and the forests sing for joy. Our lengthening day more resembles her frown. It is a grim threat, none the less terrible for menacing, mysterious, and unknown consequences. Length of days, in this sense, implies for us anything but length of life. And it is impossible to suppress the fact that our day is gradually growing longer and longer. When it shall have attained the length of a month—its utmost limit—the earth, as a residence, will be much less eligible than it is at present.

Permit me, ladies and gentlemen, to recal to your memory a few familiar but important scraps of knowledge, which everybody learns at school, and portions of which have to be unlearned afterwards. What is our day? It might very naturally have been made the space of time elapsing between one noon and the noon which precedes or follows it. We find it more convenient, as well as more logical, to make it the time between midnight and midnight. Night, the time for sleeping, makes a better frontier between one day and another, than broad daylight, when men are alert and busy. For instance, the demarcation between to-day and to-morrow is hardly recognisable in countries and at seasons when there is no night—as up at Drontheim with the midnight sun.

But what make noon and midnight? I need not inform you that noon and midnight are the result of two circumstances, namely, of the earth's shape and of her motion.

First, as to shape: the earth, you are taught, is an oblate spheroid, that is, a sphere flattened at the poles, like an orange. It is no such thing, at least as far as the orange and its flatness are concerned. To enforce the idea that a very slight flattening does actually exist, its amount is grossly exaggerated by the comparison. It is really *very* trifling, microscopical.

The earth is a globe, a ball, which is all but a perfect sphere. The statement of its roundness is usually supported by a simple test, which cannot, however, be employed inland. If you stand on the shore and watch a steamer putting out to sea, it seems at first to be going up hill, as if it were climbing the slope of a mountain. Soon, it is on the edge of the horizon, perched, as it were, on the top of the hill. Then it goes down the other side of the hill, its lower part disappearing little by little, until nothing but the chimney and its smoke are visible. And then, after a while, it is gone altogether. The same circumstances happen, in inverse order, when the steamer comes into port from the offing. As the very same appearances occur, at whatever part of the world you observe vessels at sea, it necessarily follows that the earth's surface must be circular, and not flat.

But everybody does not dwell on or near the coast. Millions live and die without ever seeing the sea, and yet they are equally interested in the form of their terrestrial tenement. Let them notice, then, the clouds as they come and go, especially in a tolerably level country.

We are in the open air, just now, ladies and gentlemen, and not confined within the four walls of a lecture-room. We are looking southwards, and the wind is blowing dead ahead *from* the south. And there, on a level with the horizon, is the top of a great white cumulus cloud. It rises, and rises, like a ghost coming up from the stage trap of a theatre. It has already risen to half its height. It goes on rising. It is *all* above the horizon. We now see its base suspended in the air. It advances towards us. We are in its shadow. It is now overhead. It sails on grandly towards the north. Let us turn

round and follow its progress. We are in no hurry; there is plenty of time.

It goes away from us, sinking down lower the further it goes. Its base touches our northern horizon, and our ghostly visitor gradually descends, disappearing in an erect position, exactly like our supposed stage phantom. Nothing but its head is visible now. And now it is gone, down, down, down. This mode of appearance and disappearance could only be exhibited by a cloud floating, at the same elevation, in a spherical atmosphere enveloping a spherical planet.

The earth, being round, is represented by means of globes, of various dimensions, each size professing to furnish us with a diminished image of our world. But the earth is not exactly globular; it *is* flattened at the ends of its polar diameter. It spins round like a top, or turns like a joint roasting before the fire; and the axis on which it spins, the imaginary spit on which it roasts, is called the polar line, whose extremities are the north and south poles. Well on measuring the earth's thickness from one pole to the other, it is found to be less than if measured in the direction of the equator. But if we wanted to represent this flattening of the earth in a globe thirteen inches in diameter, it would be imperceptible to the eye and the touch, the difference between the two thicknesses being about the thickness of an egg-shell.

On the surface of the earth there are wrinkles and roughnesses which we call mountains, and consider immense. They are so, relatively to *us*; but to the earth they are as nothing. With all the pains taken by the manufacturer to render a thirteen-inch globe perfectly smooth, there will still remain a few asperities. The biggest of those asperities, as to height, might be taken to represent the elevation of Mont Blanc. How thin, then, must be our atmosphere, when there is found to be a difficulty in breathing on such slightly elevated mountain-tops! Surely *we may* call the earth an almost perfect sphere, slightly varnished over with an atmosphere. Our range of locomotion is limited to the thickness of the varnish. In it, we go up in balloons; in it, we fall down precipices and break our necks. Between the upper and the lower surfaces of this shallow film, the lightnings dart, the thunders growl, the rains and hails pelt, and the snows congeal. Our atmosphere is an enormous *Multum in Parvo*.

The earth, which is round, is also in motion. Fancy a ball from a rifled cannon rushing onwards, and at the same time spinning on itself; fancy, while the ball is pursuing its journey, a multitude of infinitely small creatures to be produced on its surface, and you have a clear idea of the earth and its inhabitants. Only, the friction of the air, through which the cannon-ball moves, would sadly inconvenience its population; whereas the earth moves either through empty space or through an ether which offers no perceptible resistance.

Another point to be noted as explanatory of our lengthening day is, that all bodies have

weight; that is, every body has a tendency to fall *somewhere*, that somewhere being determined by the attraction exercised by other surrounding bodies. In other words, universal gravitation exists—a wonderful fact discovered by Newton. Now, a cannon-ball, shot out with slight velocity, would soon fall to the ground in consequence of the earth's attraction; and the greater the velocity with which it was projected, the greater would be the distance at which it would fall to the ground. Until we can conceive it shot with such a velocity that it would travel round and round the earth without ever falling upon it, the attractive centre being strong enough to prevent it from flying away altogether, and yet not strong enough to pull it down to itself.

Exactly as that cannon-ball would move round the earth, so does the earth travel round the sun, her speed of travelling being at the rate of about eighteen miles and a half per second; and the reciprocal attractions of the sun and the earth, and of the earth and the cannon-ball respectively, are not altogether too dissimilar for rough comparison. Represent the sun by a circle three inches in diameter, the earth will be represented by the full stop at the close of this sentence. The volume of the one is one million three hundred thousand times that of the other.

You have also, ladies and gentlemen, learned that the earth travels round the sun in an ellipse or oval; but the ellipticity, or length of the oval—like the flattening of the earth at the poles—has been much exaggerated in popular astronomy. You have seen your gardener trace an oval flower-bed. He fixes in the ground a couple of pegs connected by a slack bit of string; and, with a stick which keeps the string always stretched, he marks you out the oval required. The further apart the pegs are fixed, the longer will be the resulting oval; on the other hand, by bringing the pegs closer and closer together, you will at last get an ellipse which is hardly to be distinguished from a circle.

Such an ellipse is the earth's orbit round the sun. The places of the pegs are called the foci or focuses. The sun is not in the centre of the ellipse, but in one of the foci. The earth, therefore, is sometimes a little nearer to the sun (when it approaches the focus where the sun is placed) than at other times (when it goes away from it); and the nearer it is, the greater is the force of the sun's attractive power. The earth reaches the point of her ellipse, which is nearest to the sun, about the 1st of January, and that most distant from it about the 1st of July; but the difference of those distances is only trifling. Your eye would be unable to distinguish an exact tracing of the earth's orbit round the sun from the circumference of a perfect circle. While performing the whole tour of this circular orbit, the earth spins completely round nearly three hundred and sixty-six times, each complete spin making one of our days.

We are now approaching, ladies and gentlemen, the principal cause of our lengthening day. The earth is not alone in her celestial travels.

She is accompanied by an attendant much smaller certainly, but also very much nearer to her than the sun—so much so, in short, as to exert a considerably stronger attractive force. For the earth, take a globe six inches in diameter; the relative size of the moon will be shown by a ball a trifle more than an inch and a half through. The earth's volume is only about forty-nine times that of the moon. The moon, everybody knows, revolves round the earth, as the earth revolves round the sun; but, at the same time, the earth goes a little out of her way in consequence of the presence of the moon. In reality, they revolve round one another like two persons performing a waltz; and the couple annually whirl together round the sun in the circular orbit just described. In the moon's motion there exists, however, one remarkable peculiarity. While revolving round the earth, she also revolves on her own axis in such a way as always to keep the same face turned towards the earth.

The earth also revolves on her axis, but much more rapidly than the moon, making several turns (some eight-and-twenty) while *she* makes only one. The consequence is that, to the inhabitants of the earth, the moon appears successively to rise in the east (or thereabouts) and to set in the west. If, on the contrary, the earth had always the same hemisphere turned towards the moon, people living on the side next the moon would always behold it above the horizon. The moon would never rise nor set for them. There exists, therefore, this essential difference between the motions of the earth and the moon: the moon travels round the earth, always presenting the same face to her; whilst the earth turns on her axis, continually and successively presenting the different portions of her surface to the moon.

As the moon thus waltzes round the earth while both are waltzing together round the sun, the moon successively occupies different positions with respect to the sun. Sometimes (at new moon) she is on the same side as the sun, and sometimes (at full) on the opposite. Sometimes, therefore, her attraction pulls together with the sun's, and sometimes in a contrary direction. These pullings can effect a visible action only on that portion of the earth's surface which is capable of yielding to it, namely, the waters. And so, ladies and gentlemen, we have tides. On the shores of the ocean you must have observed that, for six hours or thereabouts, the waters flow, and then ebb for the six hours following.

Everything in nature attracts everything else. The earth attracts the moon, and the moon attracts the earth. If the earth were entirely solid, the moon's attraction would have the same effect as if applied to a single rigid body. But the earth is not entirely solid. It is covered with a certain quantity of water (forming a thin stratum relatively to the dimensions of our globe), which constitutes our seas and oceans.

The moon's attraction does not act under exactly the same conditions on the solid and the

liquid portions of the earth. The waters which are turned towards the moon, being nearer to it than the mass of the terrestrial globe, are subjected to a stronger attraction. For a like reason the waters on the opposite side are less strongly attracted than the mass of the earth. The result is, that, next the moon, the waters accumulate and form a protuberance, while, at the same time, they accumulate and form another protuberance on the opposite side.

If the earth and the moon remained always in the same position, it is clear that this phenomenon would be produced once for all. The ocean would experience a sort of swelling on the side next the moon and on that opposite; whilst, on the lateral portions, the level of the waters would be lowered.

But the earth is revolving upon her axis all the while she is being thus acted on by the moon, and therefore the liquid swelling takes place successively at different points of the earth's surface. Every instant the ocean tends to swell, both on the side next the moon and on the opposite side. But it is clear that the earth, by turning, tends to drag away with it the liquid protuberance which is formed in the direction of the moon. It is dragged away, in fact; it disappears little by little in proportion as it is carried away by the moon; it is re-made again at the same time at other points, to be carried away and disappear in turn. And so on, continually.

It follows that the liquid swelling is never exactly in the direction of the moon, or on the moon's meridian. As it is always being carried forward by the earth's rotation, it exists in reality a little further off, *beyond* the direction of the moon, *past* her meridian. The very friction of the waters in the basins of the seas, by checking the progress of the tidal wave, tends to maintain this obliquity of the position of the liquid protuberances in respect to the moon.

Now, when you want to slacken the revolution of a wheel, what course do you adopt to effect that object? You make use of friction. You put on a drag, or apply a brake, to prevent your carriage from running too fast down hill. Exactly so, the moon has clapped an ever-acting brake on the earth's rotation. The tidal wave runs *contrary* to the direction of that rotation. It chafes, and rasps, and wears away not only the shores, but also the bottoms of our shallow seas. It applies continual friction, tending to impede the spinning of our planet as she flies round her orbit. It affords the moon a handle by which to pull the earth continually back, and inevitably diminish the speed of her rotation.

There is another curious consideration connected with the subject. Whatever destroys, or tends to destroy, motion, thereby generates heat. The tidal wave, therefore, generates heat, which is partly radiated into space, and so lost to us. This incessant loss of heat is as continually supplied by the earth's rotation. The heat so generated is one of the few exceptions to the derivation of all heat, directly or indirectly, from the sun. Supposing, as Professor Tyndall puts the

case, that we turn a mill by the action of the tide and produce heat by the friction of the mill-stones; *that* heat has an origin totally different from the heat produced by another pair of mill-stones turned by a mountain stream. The former is produced at the expense of the earth's rotation; the latter at the expense of the sun's heat, which lifted the mill stream to its source.

No doubt such an influence bears on the permanence of our present terrestrial conditions. A change in them is going on. The check, however, thus put on the earth's revolution need cause no serious alarm, either to the existing generation, or to those who are soon to step into our shoes. True, in consequence of this preventive check, the length of our day is continually augmenting; because our days are the consequence of the earth's rotation on her axis. But the argumentation itself amounts to no more than one second of time in the course of one hundred thousand years.

There are eighty-six thousand four hundred seconds in a day of the current Anno Domini. If it requires one hundred thousand years for the day (in consequence of the earth's more sluggish rotation) to increase by the eighty-six thousand and four hundredth part of its length, it will take eight thousand six hundred and forty millions of years to cause that rotation to cease altogether, supposing the slackening of its speed to continue under the same conditions. Will it ever cease? Will the earth ever come to a standstill, as far as her rotation is concerned? -No; she will not.

Her rate of spinning is gradually slackened, because she spins faster than the moon, who thereby raises the waters into a heap, converting them into a brake or drag. But when once the earth spins no faster than the moon, she will always have the same hemisphere turned towards her satellite; the liquid protuberance will be no longer carried forwards, and the moon will have no further hold whereby to check the earth's rotation. The period of the earth's rotation would then coincide with that of the moon's revolution round the earth. In short, the earth, at last, would constantly turn the same face to the moon, exactly as the moon turns the same to us.

It is only natural to suppose that the very same cause has produced the singularity which we observe in the movements of the moon. If she always turns the same face to the earth, the cause ought to be analogous to that now submitted to your consideration.

But things may not even go so far as that. As time slips away (and it requires a *great* many ages to realise the circumstances alluded to), the earth's temperature is expected gradually to drop. The waters of the ocean may be converted into ice; with no more water there will be no more tides; the cause of the slackening of the rotatory movement will disappear, and the earth will thenceforth continue to turn with a constant velocity.

The exact amount of the slackening is not yet known; it is ascertained approximately only by

the indications afforded by ancient eclipses. Its accurate determination must be a work of time. Meanwhile, ladies and gentlemen, it was right that you should be apprised of its existence.

UNEASY SHAVING.

I WONDER whether a man is more likely to be sleepless on the night before he is married, or on the night before he is hanged! I have experience of only the more blissful of these two kinds of anticipation; but I confess that the night before I was to be joined to my beloved Julia in the bonds of wedlock was one of the most restless I ever passed in my life. I am a timid man, a nervous man, a man ever painfully conscious of all his defects and deficiencies, but never before had I felt such a poignant regret that I could not add a couple of inches to my stature; and when I reflected that I had never had the courage to reveal to Julia a carefully concealed bald spot on my head, which she would now be sure to discover, to my shame and confusion, my remorse was terrible. Then I thought of that dark little parlour behind my shop in the dingy village where I lived, and I felt how dull Julia would find it after always sitting engaged in tasteful millinery-work at her front first-floor window in even that quiet street of our country town.

The fact is—and I own it with humiliation—I was not up to Julia's level. To be sure, I had a nice snug little business in the drapery, pin and needle, note paper, bacon, and general line at our village, but surely Julia was not the girl to be influenced by such a consideration, and besides, she had a good business and a hundred and fifty pounds of her own. No, it must have been the depth of my devotion, and I must do myself the credit of saying that I was exceedingly devoted. I don't think there was a single article in my shop—drapery, grocery, needles and pins, note paper, bacon, or general line—from which I had not sent her presents of the best; and when I returned from London in the spring, I brought her such a shawl as my village—whatever may have been the case with her town—had never seen or dreamed of. Julia was *so* superior to me! Such a magnificent brunette, at least three inches taller than myself, with black hair, brilliant dark eyes, splendid figure, such a walk, and such a spirit! It was not until after many a fear, and many a jealous doubt, that I had at length prospered so well in my courtship. I had been madly jealous when that young scamp of a cousin of hers came home from sea; I had been madly jealous of the inspector of police, after the street row in which he behaved with such distinguished gallantry; worse than all, I had been madly jealous of her flirtation with young Twiggs, of the militia staff, after the review. It was my jealousy of that martial Twiggs which drove me to the desperate resolution of joining the Volunteers, and expending the sum of four pounds in a suit of uniform. But soldiering did not suit me. I might have

managed eventually to fire off a gun, but the sight of cold glittering steel was too much for my nerves, and the manners of the drill-sergeant were so excessively rude that I was obliged to give the thing up. Twiggs about the same time retired from the militia, and no longer harassed me by his hateful presence in the town; but Julia's conduct still continued (to say the least of it) excessively trying, and not until within the last fortnight had I been able to induce her to name the happy day. The prevailing feelings of my heart were feelings of delight and triumph. Still I was restless, horribly restless, and as I heard the clock strike one hour after another, I became painfully sensible of the injurious effect that such restlessness would have on my nerves and appearance for the following day.

I got up in the morning at a not very early hour, and dressed myself with scrupulous care in garments which, though by no means of overpowering magnificence, were unmistakably suggestive of matrimonial intentions. But when I attempted to shave, my hand shook so as to make it likely that the operation, if persevered in, would be sanguinary. My beard grows with a strength and determination which no one acquainted with my character would suppose possible unless he saw it. My beard is also of a dirtyish yellow colour. I could not proceed to church to meet my bride without having it closely removed. I therefore determined to step into some barber's shop and get it done. And so I made my breakfast with what appetite I might, put the license and the ring into my pocket, and set out for the town where Julia lived.

This town was about twenty minutes by rail from our village, and I arrived there in very good time. Julia and I had agreed that our wedding should be as quiet as possible; and it had been arranged that I should walk alone to the church, while she should proceed thither in a carriage, accompanied only by an uncle and a younger sister. My way to the church lay by Julia's door, and so much was I engrossed by thoughts of the coming ceremony, that it was not until I had arrived at that point, that the sight of a barber's pole on the opposite side of the way, reminded me that I had not yet got shaved. I glanced at Julia's window, but I was so early that no one was visible, and there was as yet no sign of a carriage at the door. I looked at my watch, and stepped into the barber's shop.

The window of the shop fronted the street, but the door was up a little court by the side, so that, as the barber happened to be looking out of window when I entered, I could not see the barber's face, neither did the barber see me. It seemed as if he did not hear me either; seating myself in a chair in the middle of the shop, and placing my hat on a form, I said, in a mild tone of voice: "I want a shave, if you please."

The barber did not move, and the expression of his countenance—as far as could be inferred from an inspection of the back of his head—was one of melancholy abstraction.

Again I said, in a somewhat louder tone: "I will trouble you to shave me, if you please."

Still, the barber did not move.

Surprised at this, I called out in a sharper manner: "I want a shave!"

The barber, with a callous indifference to all precedent, remained unmoved.

I fancied he must be deaf, and next time concentrated all the power of my lungs—which would have otherwise been diffused over a whole sentence—into a most emphatic pronunciation of one word: "*Shave!*"

This unwanted firmness of policy produced its effect, and the barber turned towards me.

He was a tall young man, slender but well built, tolerably good looking, with a dark moustache, but without whiskers or beard; his eyes were large and well opened, but appeared, as he first looked towards me, as if they saw nothing of me, or my beard, or anything else. One would have supposed that he had never heard of shaving before.

I thought all this very queer; but still supposing that he must be deaf, I put my hands to my mouth, so as to form a natural speaking-trumpet, and bawled out as loudly as I could:

"I want a—*shave!* And please to—make *haste!* I have a pressing—*engagement!*"

In a moment his eyes flashed with a strange light. Advancing towards me with a bound, he seized a chair, set it down with most unnecessary violence opposite to mine, threw himself into it, and, leaning forward with his hands on his thighs, eyed me over, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, and back again, and said, as if I had made a most extraordinary request: "You want to be shaved?"

I was beginning to be alarmed at all this, and only thought now of beating a retreat; so, taking out my watch, I said: "Well—a—I did think of it; but I see I have not time now. Good morning." And I rose to go away.

But the barber rose also; and, pressing me back into the chair by main force, stood over me with one hand on each of my shoulders, whilst I looked up at him in utter terror and astonishment.

"You came into this shop," said he; "you came into this shop, to be shaved?"

"Ye—yes," was all I could stammer out.

"And by me?"

"Well, I—I suppose so."

"Then baste me!" cried he, "but I'll do it!"

Stepping to the door, he locked it in the most determined manner, and put the key into the pocket of his light linen jacket.

I rather take credit to myself that I did not faint away at once; but that, on the contrary, I began to consider my chances of escape. The barber was certainly mad, but perhaps I might be able to pacify him, and induce him to let me go; or perhaps some other customer might come in. Surely somebody would come! I looked through the window, but the street was quiet and still. A dog lay basking in the sun; a horse seemed to be going to sleep where he was tied to the door of a public-house next to Julia's dwelling; but scarcely anybody passed, and nobody came to be shaved.

The barber went to the little fireplace, took up a pot of soapsuds, and stirred them round

with a savage earnestness which I have never seen equalled, and then stropped a razor with such ferocity that I thought my last hour was come. So intent did he appear on this operation, that I rose from my chair with the half-formed resolution of disregarding the danger of broken glass, and making a spring slap through the window into the street. But the barber was on me like a tiger, and dashed the shaving-brush, full of lather, into my face, with such violence as to knock me back into my seat, to stifle a scream in which I was about to lift up my voice, and to make me splutter and cough for a considerable period.

When I had somewhat recovered, I saw the barber again seated in the chair opposite to me; and when our eyes met, he said: "Ah, you tremble! Say, do you doubt my skill?"

"Oh no; oh dear no; quite the contrary," I replied.

"Do you see this arm?" He rolled up his sleeve. "Does it look muscular?"

"Oh, very, very muscular," I gasped, "exceedingly muscular." And so it did.

"Do you see this razor? Is it keen?"

"Very keen indeed," I replied, with a shudder.

"Do you doubt its ability to shave *you*?"

"Oh no; oh dear no," I replied.

"Then is it, after all, my skill?" he cried, in a voice of thunder. "Is it my skill that you doubt?"

"My dear sir," said I, in my most blandishing manner, "not at all, not at all. I assure you I have the utmost confidence in your skill; but time, my dear sir, time." There was not much time to spare if I was to be married, instead of murdered, that fine morning.

"Time!" cried the barber, with a dreadful flourish of his razor, "time was made for slaves!"

There was something reassuring in this last observation, which I remembered to have heard at a convivial meeting. Fancying that the barber might not be wholly devoid of human sympathy, I determined to tell him on what errand I was bound. I said, in as wheedling and insinuating a manner as I could, and with an attempt to appear jocose, which, I think, was highly creditable to me under the circumstances: "My dear sir, the fact is, between you and me and the post, that I am on my way to be married, and that it is time for me to be at church. Ha, ha! I am sure I need not remind a gentleman who is, no doubt, a favourite with the sex, that, when a lady's in the case—Ha, ha!" I rubbed my hands in a manner intended to be expressive of perfect ease and cheerfulness, and again rose to depart.

But my appeal did not produce the effect I had intended; for the barber started up, and waved the glittering razor in my face in such very close proximity to my nose that I dropped again into the chair. He then went stamping and striding about the shop, shouting: "Going to be married! Going to swear a peace! False blood to false blood joined! Rash mortal, why did you remind me of marriage? Oh, lost, lost *Jemima!*" Taking a cheap china ornament from the mantel-piece, he dashed it to the floor, and deliberately crunched each separate fragment into powder under the heel of his boot. And whilst

he was doing this with a most vindictive expression of countenance, I saw Julia come to her window in bridal costume, and look anxiously down the street, as if expecting the arrival of the carriage. Imagine my feelings!

And still the street remained quiet, the dog lay basking in the sun, the horse seemed going to sleep outside the public-house door, scarcely anybody passed, and nobody came to be shaved.

After the barber had ground the china ornament to powder, he again seated himself opposite to me.

"And you would really go to be married with that beard unshaved?"

"Well," said I, endeavouring to propitiate him, "well, I don't know. I think not. I think I won't be married at all, as the idea seems disagreeable to you."

"Disagreeable to me? Quite the reverse," he replied, with a wave of his razor. "It will afford me the greatest pleasure for you to be married; and I'll go to church with you, and while the ceremony is being performed, I will assist the officiating clergyman by dancing a hornpipe on the top of the steeple! That is—that is," he whispered in my ear, "*if you survive the shaving.*"

"But, my good sir," I faltered, "I can go without being shaved. Better for me to be married without being shaved, than to be shaved without being married."

"Quite a mistake," cried the barber; "quite a mistake, I assure you. Never was there a greater fallacy. Married with that beard? Perish the thought!"

Throwing a cloth over my shoulders, he at once began lathering away with prodigious rapidity—lathering not only my chin, but my cheeks, my nose, my ears, my throat, my nostrils, my teeth, my forehead, to the very roots of my hair. My eyes alone he avoided, working around them with as much care as if he were an artist painting a delicate picture.

Under this infliction, I saw the carriage drive up to Julia's door, and presently drive off again in the direction of the church; whilst through its window I saw a fleeting vision of two white veils and a white waistcoat.

Two or three women came out of their houses to look at the carriage, but otherwise the street remained quiet, the dog still lay basking in the sun, the horse kept on going to sleep outside the public-house door, scarcely anybody passed, and nobody came to be shaved.

At that moment I saw a man walking on the other side of the street. He looked at the barber's pole; he paused; he passed his hand over his chin; he was a dirty-faced man. I could see, even from that distance, that he had not been shaved for a week; surely, surely, he would come, and I should be rescued. He crossed to our side of the street, and stood outside the window. He was coming! He paused again. He put his hand into his pocket, took out some pence, and looked at them. He shook his head. He re-crossed the street, and went into the public-house. I suppose he spent his money in beer. Oh, that horrid vice of intemperance!

Still the barber lathered away, as though he would never cease, using the brush now with the right hand, now with the left.

Another man stopped in the street and looked at the barber's pole; he too passed his hand over his chin. He was a decent, respectable-looking man; had on a cleanish shirt and an average hat. My heart bounded with hope. Surely such a respectable man would be particular about his appearance. Surely such an exemplary man would come to be shaved. He too put his hand to his pocket, but, instead of pence, he took out a watch. He looked at his watch, and seemed startled. He shook his head, and passed on.

And so the dog still lay basking in the sun, and the horse kept going to sleep outside the inn door, and few people passed by, and nobody came to be shaved.

And still the barber kept lathering away at me. I felt as if the lather must be an inch thick upon my face, and of the consistency of clay. I became sick and faint, and there was a buzzing noise in my ears, as if I had been under water.

Another man! He did not pause; he did not hesitate; he did not pass his hand over his chin; he did not feel in his pocket. He walked very fast; he turned sharply into the court; he tried to open the door of the shop. The barber ceased lathering; the shaving-brush was stilled. I would have screamed for help, only the barber jobbed the suds fiercely into my mouth. While I was spluttering them out, the man tried the door again; he rattled the latch. I was about to risk all, when, with an oath, the man moved away, and I heard his departing footsteps die away along the street.

The barber did not resume the use of the shaving-brush—both he and his soapsuds were pretty nearly exhausted—but he took the razor and passed it once or twice over the strop, and then, pulling a handful of hairs from my head, tried the edge of the blade upon one of them. The hair was split, and the barber appeared satisfied. He raised his left hand and took hold of my nose; he held my nose much more tightly than the exigencies of the occasion required; he twisted my nose about in every direction, he elongated and compressed my nose as if it had been made of gutta-percha. The pastime seemed to afford him grim satisfaction. I forced myself to grin, as though it were a capital joke. At length he ceased and advanced the razor. It was a terrible moment. The barber stared at me, and then again seated himself in the chair, and said, in a more conversational and easy tone than he had before used:

"Perhaps—perhaps you think I am mad?" This, if any, was a time in which a little white fibbing was venial, and I replied:

"Oh dear no, my dear sir, quite the contrary—a little eccentric, perhaps," and I forced a smile, "but nothing more."

"Oh, if you did," said he, lightly and airily, "you would not be the only one. Many have shared the delusion. Many persons, themselves insane, have formed that erroneous opinion. But woe to him," and he brandished the razor—

"woe to him who does not instantly expel it from his mind! You—you do *not* consider me mad; eh?"

"My dear sir," said I, "how can you suspect such a thing for a moment? On the contrary, I consider you the most perfectly sane and sensible person I ever met."

"Good. And my conversation is both instructive and agreeable to you?"

"Highly so," I replied. "I should like, above all things, to come back and spend the afternoon with you. But at present—I am very sorry, but I—I fear I must be going. In fact, that pressing engagement I spoke of——"

The comparative mildness of his manner had emboldened me to make this further attempt to escape; but it did not succeed.

He gave me a look which again made me shrink into myself, and said:

"As it is well known, and fully understood both by me and by yourself, that I *must* and *will* shave you, it is right and proper that I should, before commencing that difficult and delicate operation, explain to you the precise position in which we stand. I perceive that, unfortunately, you tremble a good deal; and, moreover, that you have a considerable mole on one cheek, and one or two dangerous-looking pimples on the other. I fear," he shook his head gravely, "I fear that those protuberances may cause most serious, if not fatal, difficulties. It appears to me, then, that, before commencing my arduous task, it will be advisable for me to relate to you a portion of my history, so that you may understand the perilous position in which we are placed."

He hemmed, and cleared his voice in a most respectable and orthodox manner. I really began to hope that he was working his way round to his right mind.

At this time I saw a girl pass through the street, carrying a piece of roast meat from the bakehouse. It was twelve o'clock, and all chance of my being at church in time was at an end for that day. But I scarcely heeded it. All I cared for now, was escape.

The barber resumed:

"Know then," said he, "that at a former period of my existence I had a shop of a similar kind to this. It was a Saturday evening; business was immense, overwhelming. As the customers stood waiting for their turns, they were packed as thick as herrings in a barrel. They were mostly coalheavers. Coals are beneficial to the growth of beards, though detrimental to razors. Can it be wondered at, that my arms grew feeble and my eyelids heavy? I had no assistants, I always scorned assistance. I was happy, for on the morrow, on that very Sunday which was so close at hand, I was to wed my *Jemima*. O *Jemima*! It was half-past eleven o'clock, and it seemed as if I were to have no more customers that night. But I did not close until twelve, and my razors were all blunted; so I determined to get one of them thoroughly sharp before I shut the shop. I took one, and honed it, and stropped it and stropped it until it was in wonderful order, and fit to shave

the down from the cheek of a peach. This razor that I have just prepared for you is the nearest approach to it that I have ever seen."

He passed the razor a few times over the palm of his hand, and resumed:

"It was close on the stroke of twelve. I put up the shutters, and partly closed the door. I was about to turn off the gas, believing that work was over for the night, when one more customer entered. I knew him well. I had shaved him before. He was a little old weazen man. He was the clerk of the parish church, to which I sometimes went. His throat was long and skinny, and its larynx was very prominent. The larynx of *your* throat," and the barber stepped back a pace, and looked at me with the air of a connoisseur, "reminds me forcibly of his. He was a bachelor, and was supposed to have money. His name was Towzer!"

The barber was moved to tears. While he wept, I looked at my watch. It was twenty minutes after twelve, but the barber seemed more rational than before. I hoped soon to get away.

"The old man seated himself," continued the barber, "and pointed to his chin. I lathered him, and began to shave. I got on very well with his upper lip and the upper part of his chin, but when I came to the regions of the throat, being somewhat sleepy, I made a little slip, and drew blood. The old clerk was very angry. I apologised, and began again. In an instant, in a moment, a sudden choking fit of coughing seized him, and, before I could withdraw my hand, his throat came forward with a violent jerk against the keen edge of the razor, and the blood spurted out. He fell down in a wet heap on the floor, and was dead almost directly!"

The barber paused, and pressed his hand to his head. I was horribly startled at this unlooked-for incident in the tale. I had expected something mournfully sentimental about *Jemima*.

He continued, and his manner again became excited:

"I fled at once; fled all night, all next day, for a week, for a month, for six months; straight on, straight on, through fire, water, wind, hail, snow, fog, mist, thunder, soda-water, and treacle. But the pursuers were on the track, they were close behind, I heard them coming. I escaped them. The means by which I escaped I shall never reveal, as I may want them again. A short time since, I arrived in this town. I came, concealed in the steam of an express engine. This shop was to be let. I took it. I put a constraint upon my tongue and upon my features. No one suspected me. Last night was the Towzer anniversary. As it approached, I felt that something must happen. I did not go to bed. You would not have had me go to bed, would you? Very well then; don't look as if you would. I stayed alone in the shop. From half-past eleven to twelve I employed myself in stropping a razor—this one—as I had done *then*. At the stroke of twelve old Towzer came in through the closed door, and seated himself in the chair where you now sit. I could not help myself. I advanced to shave him. But he motioned me back, and said, in

the same creaking voice in which he used to say Amen, 'To-morrow one customer will come into your shop. Only one. Shave him! Shave him! Shave him! *as you shaved me!*' He pointed to his throat, and vanished. I have been thinking over the matter, and have arrived at the conclusion that I am not necessarily bound to cut your throat. I did not cut the old man's; he did it himself; and, therefore, I hope that all may yet be well. If I can shave you without drawing a drop of blood, you will escape. But if I accidentally cut you, as I did Towzer, the coincidence will be so remarkable that I shall feel myself bound to go on. You see the point? Ever since that terrible night, I have not been able to see a drop of blood, but I must see more! more! more!"

At this time, the carriage drove up to Julia's door, having returned from its fruitless journey to the church. I heard the steps let down, and the house door open and shut, and then I heard the carriage drive off. But I could see only dimly, for I felt sick and faint.

The barber also heard, and looked towards the window. As he again turned to me, I thought I saw a smile flit over his features. I felt somewhat encouraged.

"Why, you are still trembling," he said. "I cannot proceed, with any hope of safety, until you are more quiet."

I was glad to hear him say that; for, dreadful as was my present position, anything was better than that he should commence the use of the razor under the terrible conditions he had mentioned. Lending a somewhat unnecessary aid to nature, I shook to such an extent that the barber, mad as he was, looked positively alarmed.

As I heard his next words, I could scarcely believe my ears.

"Why, you are getting worse than ever," said he, "and my hand might be more steady too. I had no rest last night. Now, I'll tell you what we'll do. Let us take forty winks apiece—you in that chair—I in this. The one who awakes first, shall call the other, and then we will proceed to business. A nap will calm our nerves. What do you say?"

"The very thing," I cried. And oh, how my heart beat with hope. Nothing could have been more favourable to my chances of escape. The key of the door was still in his pocket. I could see the handle of it peeping out. Oh that he would sleep quickly and sleep soundly!

The barber closed his razor, yawned, stretched out his legs, and folded his arms. I stilled my trembling limbs as well as I could, and, at the earliest moment consistent with probability, began to draw my breath regularly, as if asleep. Presently I fancied I heard the barber snore. I ventured to steal a glance at the barber. His eyes were shut, and he was decidedly nodding. He shifted his position, and leaned back in the chair to rest his head. Half a minute more and his breathing became regular, then loud, then outrageous, until he snored like an ogre.

Now was my time! I arose, and two steps brought me to his side. My boots were new boots, and creaked horribly as I stepped. But the barber did not awake. Without trouble or difficulty I drew the key from his pocket. I passed behind his chair. I was at the door. I put the key into the lock, turned it, the door opened easily. I was free! I was gone!

I rushed down the court; I fled up the street; I was without a hat, the shaving-cloth was still on my shoulders, my face was thickly covered with lather, so that I must have considerably terrified the persons in the streets. I have since heard that one old lady was frightened into fits. But whither I went, what I did, or what I said, I do not of my own knowledge know at all.

One thing, incredible as it seemed to me at first, I was ultimately compelled to believe. The barber was no more mad than I was. He had come into the town some little time before, as an actor at the theatre; but not finding that a very lucrative pursuit, had resumed his original trade of shaving. I believe he had managed to persuade Julia that he did so, solely for love of her; unknown to me, he had been for some time her favoured suitor; she had already promised to marry him, when I cut him out. He was aware that it was my wedding-day, and was brooding over his wrongs when I by fatal chance entered his shop. He knew me by sight, and conceived the idea of taking revenge both on Julia and on myself, by preventing me from going to church until canonical hours were past.

He attained his object more fully, perhaps, than he anticipated; for Julia would never have anything to say to me again, and her door was always closed in my face in the most uncompromising manner possible. To a letter of explanation I sent her, she returned a reply to the effect that it made no difference, for she would never marry a poltroon. Yes, that was the word; as if a person in the drapery, grocery, pin and needle, note-paper, bacon, and general line, were required to be a hero! After a little while, I gave the thing up, and, unable to withstand the continual jeering of boys and others, sold my business, and retired to another part of the kingdom.

I have since been informed that Julia at last forgave the barber for having caused the mortifying predicament in which she had been placed, and became his wife. He soon after returned to the stage, where he did pretty well, and would have done better, if he had not been somewhat too fond of drink. I hear that Julia henpecks him horribly, and leads him by no means an angel of a life; so, perhaps, I am well out of it after all, for if she can serve him so, what would she have done by me?

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

CHAPTER V. GOING DOWN.

ON the evening of the day appointed for the dinner, Mr. Philip Deane stood on the steps of Barton's restaurant in the Strand, in anything but a contented frame of mind. His face, never too frank or genial in its expression, was puckered and set in rigid lines; his right hand was perpetually diving into his waistcoat-pocket for his watch, to which he constantly referred; while, with a slight stick which he carried in his left, he kept striking his leg in an irritable and irritating manner.

Mr. Deane had cause for annoyance; it was a quarter past seven, and neither of the guests whom he had invited had as yet appeared, though the dinner had been appointed for seven sharp. Crowds of men were pouring into and out of the restaurant, the first hungry and expectant, the last placid and replete; and Mr. Deane envied the first for what they were about to receive, and the last for what they had received. Moreover, the intended diners had in several cases pushed against him with scant ceremony, and Mr. Deane was not accustomed to be pushed against; while the people who had dined eyed him, as they stood on the steps lighting their cigars, with something like compassion, and Mr. Deane was unused to be pitied. So he stood there fretting and fuming, and biting his lips and flicking his legs, until his shoulder was grasped by George Dallas, who, with as much breath as he could command—not much, for he had been running—said:

"My dear Deane! a thousand apologies for being so late! Not my own fault, I protest!"

"Never is, of course," said Mr. Deane.

"Really it was not in this instance. I went round to the Mercury office to look at some proofs, and they kept me to do an article on a subject which I had had the handling of before, and which—"

"No one else could handle arter you, eh? Pretty tall opinion you newspaper-writin' fellows have of yourselves! And why didn't you bring Routh with you when you did come?"

"Routh? I haven't seen him for three days. Isn't he here?"

"Not he! I've been coolin' myself on this

a'mighty old door-step since seven o'clock, only once goin' inside just to look round the saloon, and I've not set eyes on him yet."

"How very odd!"

"So very odd, that I'll see him somethingest before I wait for him any longer! Come you in with me. I took a table right slick opposite the door, and we'll go and strike up at once."

He turned on his heel as he spoke, and walked up the passage into the large coffee-room of the restaurant. Dallas, who followed him closely, noticed him pause for an instant before one of the looking-glasses in the passage, put his hat a little more on one side, and throw open the folds of his fur-lined coat. Beneath this noticeable garment Mr. Deane wore a large baggy suit of black, an open-worked shirt-front with three large diamond studs in it, a heavy gold watch-chain. There was a large diamond ring on the little finger of each hand. Thus tastefully attired, Mr. Deane, swaggering easily up the centre of the coffee-room and slapping his leg with his stick as he went, at length stopped at a vacant table, and clinked a knife against a tumbler.

"Now, waiter! Just look smart and slippy, and bring up our dinner right away. One of my friends is here, and I'm not a-goin' to wait for the other. He must take his chance, he must; but bring up ours at once, d'ye hear? Why, what on airth is *this*?"

"*This*" was a boy of about twelve years of age, with a dirty face and grimy hands, with an old peakless cap on its head, and a very shiny, greasy, ragged suit on its back. "*This*" seemed to have been running hard, and was out of breath, and was very hot and damp in the face. Following Mr. Deane's glance, the waiter's eyes lighted on "*this*," and that functionary immediately fell into wrathful vernacular.

"Hallo! what are you doing here?" said he.

"Come, you get out of this, d'ye hear?"

"I hear," said the boy, without moving a muscle. "Don't you flurry yourself in that way often, or you'll bust! And what a go that'd be! You should think of your precious family, you should!"

"Will you —"

"No, I won't, and that's all about it. Here, guv'nor"—to Deane—"you're my pitch; I've brought this for you." As he said this, the boy produced from his pocket a bit of string, a pair of musical bones, and a crumpled note, and handed the latter to Deane, who stepped aside

to the nearest gas-jet to read it. To the great indignation of the waiter, the boy sat himself down on the edge of a chair, and, kicking his legs to and fro, surveyed the assembled company with calm deliberation. He appeared to be taking stock generally of everything round him. Between his dirty finger and thumb he took up a corner of the dinner-cloth, then he passed his hand lightly over Dallas's overcoat, which was lying on an adjacent chair. This gave the waiter his chance of bursting out again.

"Leave that coat alone, can't you? Can't you keep your fingers off things that don't belong to you? Thought it was your own, perhaps, didn't you?" This last remark, in a highly sarcastic tone, as he lifted the coat from the chair and was about to carry it to a row of pegs by the door. "This ain't your mark, I believe? Your tailor don't live at Hamherst, does he?"

"Never mind my tailor, old cock! P'raps you'd like my card, but I've 'appened to come out without one. But you can have my name and address—they're very haristocratic, not such as you're used to. Jim Swain's my name—Strike-a-light-Jem—60, Fullwood's-rents. Now, tell me who's your barber!" The waiter, who had a head as bald as a billiard-ball, was highly incensed at this remark (which sent some young men at an adjoining table into roars of laughter), and he would probably have found some means of venting his wrath, had not a sharp exclamation from Deane called off his attention.

"Get up dinner, waiter, at once, and clear off this third place, d'ye hear? The other gentleman ain't comin'. Now, boy, what are you waiting for?"

"No answer to go back, is there, guv'nor?"

"Answer? No; none."

"All right. Shall I take that sixpence of you now, or will you give it me to-morrow? Short reck'nings is my motter. So if you're goin' to give it, hand it over."

Unable to resist a smile, Deane took a small coin from his purse and handed it to the boy, who looked at it, put it in his pocket, nodded carelessly to Deane and Dallas, and departed, whistling loudly.

"Routh is not coming, I suppose?" said Dallas, as they seated themselves at the table.

"No, he has defected, like a cussed skunk as he is, after giving me the trouble to order his dinner, which I shall have to pay for all the same. Regular riles me that does, to be put in the hole for such a one-horse concern as Mr. Routh. He ought to know better than to play such tricks with me."

"Perhaps he is compelled to absent himself. I know——"

"Compelled! That might do with some people, but it won't nohow do with me. I allow no man to put a rudeness on me. Mr. Routh wants more of me than I do of him, as I'll show him before long. He wants me to come to his rooms to-morrow night—that's for his pleasure and profit, I guess, not mine—just depends on the humour I'm in. Now here's the

dinner. Let's get at it at once. There's been no screwin' nor scrapin' in the ordering of it, and you can just give Routh a back-hander next time you see him by telling him how much you liked it."

Deane unfolded his table-napkin with a flourish, and cleared a space in front of him for his plate. There was an evil expression on his face; a mordant, bitter, savage expression, which Dallas did not fail to remark. However, he took no notice of it, and the conversation during dinner was confined to ordinary common-places.

Mr. Deane had not boasted without reason; the dinner was excellent, the wines were choice and abundant, and with another kind of companion George Dallas would have enjoyed himself. But even in the discussion of the most ordinary topics there was a low coarseness in Deane's conversation, a vulgar self-sufficiency and delight at his own shrewdness, a miserable mistrust of every one, and a general arrogance and conceit which were highly nettling and repulsive. During dinner these amiable qualities displayed themselves in Mr. Deane's communication with the waiter; it was not until the cloth had been removed, and they were taking their first glass of port, that Deane reverted to what had annoyed him before they sat down.

"That Routh's what they call a mean cuss, t'other side the water," he commenced; "a mean cuss he is, and nothing else. Throwing me over in this way at the last minute, and never sending word before, so that I might have said we shall only be two instead of three, and saved paying for him! He thinks he's cruel wide awake, he does; but though he's been at it all his life, and it's not six months since I first caught sight of this little village nominated London, I don't think there's much he could put me up to now!"

He looked so expectant of a compliment, that Dallas felt bound to say: "You certainly seem to have made the most of your time!"

"Made the most of my time? I reckon I have! Why, there's no s'loon, oyster-cellar, dancing-shop, night-house of any name at all, where I'm not regular well known. 'Here's the Yankee,' they say, when I come in; not that I'm that, but I've told 'em I hail from the U-nited States, and that's why they call me the Yankee. They know me, and they know I pay my way as I go, and that I've got plenty of money. Help yourself—good port this, ain't it?—ought to be, for they charge eight shillings a bottle for it. Why, people out t'other side the water, sir, they think I'm staying in titled country-houses, and dining in Portland-place, and going to hear oratorios. I've got letters of introduction in my desk which would do all that, and more. Never mind! I like to shake a loose leg, and, as I flatter myself I can pretty well take care of myself, I shake it!"

"Yes," said Dallas, in a slightly bitter tone, with a vivid recollection of his losses at cards to Deane; "yes, you can take care of yourself."

"Rather think so," repeated Deane, with a jarring laugh. "There are two things which are guiding principles with me—number one,

never to lend a dollar to any man; number two, always to have the full value of every dollar I spend. If you do that, you'll generally find yourself not a loser in the end. We'll have another bottle of this eight-shilling port. I've had the value of this dinner out of you, recollect, so that I'm not straying from my principle. Here, waiter, another bottle of this eight-shilling wine!"

"You're a lucky fellow, Deane," said George Dallas, slowly finishing his second glass of the fresh bottle; "you're a lucky fellow, to have plenty of money and to be your own master, able to choose your own company, and do as you like. I wish I had the chance!" As Dallas spoke, he filled his glass again.

"Well, there are worse berths than mine in the ship, and that's a fact!" said Deane, calmly. "I've often thought about you, Dallas, I have now, and I've often wondered when you'll be like the prodigal son, and go home to your father, and succeed the old man in the business."

"I have no father!"

"Hain't you though? But you've got some friends, I reckon, who are not over-delighted at your campin' out with the wild Injuns you're living among at present?"

"I have a mother."

"That's a step towards respectability. I suppose you'll go back to the old lady, some day, and be welcomed with open arms?"

"There's some one else to have a say in that matter. My mother is—is married again. I have a step-father."

"Not generally a pleasant relation, but no reason why you shouldn't help yourself to this eight-shilling wine. That's right; pass the bottle. A step-father, eh? And he and you have collided more than once, I expect?"

"Have what?"

"Collided."

"Do you mean come into collision?"

"Expect I do," said Deane, calmly.

"I'm forbidden the house. I'm looked upon as a black sheep—a pest—a contamination."

"But the old gentleman wouldn't catch anything from you. They don't take contamination easy, after fifty!"

"Oh, it's not for himself that Mr. Carruthers is anxious; he is infliction proof—he—What is the matter?"

"Matter? Nothing! What namedid you say?"

"Carruthers—Capel Carruthers. County family down in Kent."

"Go ahead!" said Deane, tossing off his wine, refilling his glass, and pushing the bottle to his companion; "and this old gentleman is not anxious about himself, you say; where is your bad influence likely to fall, then?"

"On his niece, who lives with them."

"What's her name?"

"Clare. Clare Carruthers! Isn't it a pretty name?"

"It is so, sir! And this niece. What's she like, now?"

George Dallas began to throw a knowing gleam into his eyes, which the perpetual motion of the decanter had rendered somewhat bleared

and vacant, as he looked across at his companion, and said with a half laugh: "You seem to take a great interest in my family, Deane?"

Not one whit discomposed, Philip Deane replied: "Study of character as a citizen of the world, and a general desire to hear what all gals are like. Is Miss Clare pretty?"

"I've only seen her once, and that not too clearly. But she struck me as being lovely."

"Lovely, eh? And the old man won't have you at any price? That's awkward, that is!"

"Awkward!" said Dallas, in a thick voice, "it's more than awkward, as he shall find! I'll be even with him—I'll—Hullo! What do you want, intruding on gentlemen's conversation?"

"Beg pardon, sir," said the waiter, to whom this last remark was addressed; "no offence, gentlemen, but going to shut up now! We ain't a supper-ouse, gentlemen, and it's going on for twelve o'clock."

Indeed, all the other tables were vacated, so Deane rose at once and paid the bill which the waiter had laid before him. Dallas rose too with a staggering step.

"Coat, sir," said the waiter, handing it to him; "other arm, sir, please; gently does it, sir; that's it!" And with some little difficulty he pulled the coat on: George Dallas cursing it, and the country tailor who had made it, as he stood rocking uneasily on his heels and glaring vacantly before him.

"Come along, old horse," said Deane; "you'll be fixed as firm as Washington Capitol when we get into the air. Come along, and we'll go and finish the night somewhere!"

So saying, he tucked his companion's arm firmly within his own, and they sallied forth.

CHAPTER VI. DELAY.

GEORGE DALLAS felt that his fortunes were in the ascendant, when he arose on the morning following the dinner with Deane, and found himself possessed of ten pounds, which he had been sufficiently sober to win at billiards the previous night, and consequently in a position to pay off his landlady, and turn his back upon the wretched lodging, which her temper, tyranny, and meanness, had made more wretched. He lost no time in packing up the few articles he possessed—mainly consisting of books and drawing materials—and these, together with his scanty wardrobe, he threw into a couple of trunks, which he himself carried down the steep dark staircase and deposited in a cab. The landlady stood at the door, in the grey morning, and watched her late lodger, as he strode down the shabby little street, followed by the luggage-laden cab. She watched him, wondering. She wondered where he had got the money he had just paid her. She wondered where he had got the money to pay an extra week's rent, in default of a week's notice. When she had dunned him yesterday, as rudely and mercilessly as usual, he had said nothing indicative of an expectation of an immediate supply of money. He had only said that he hoped to pay her soon. "Where did he get the money?" the old woman

thought, as she watched him. "I hope he come by it honest. I wonder where he's going to. He did not tell the cabman, leastways so as I could hear him. Ah! It ain't no business of mine; I'll just turn the rooms out a bit, and put up the bill."

So Mrs. Gunther (for that was the lady's name) re-entered the shabby house, and a great activity accompanied by perpetual scolding pervaded it for some hours, during which the late tenant was journeying down to Amherst.

George Dallas strictly observed the directions contained in his mother's letter, and having started by an early train, reached Amherst at noon. Rightly supposing that at such an hour it would be useless to look for his mother in the little town, he crossed the railroad in a direction leading away from Amherst, struck into some fields, and wandered on by a rough footpath which led through a copse of beech-trees to a round bare hill. He sat down when he had reached this spot, from whence he could see the road to and from Poynings. A turnpike was at a little distance, and he saw a carriage stopped beside the gate, and a footman at the door receiving an order from a lady, whose bonnet he could just discern in the distance. He stood up and waited. The carriage approached, and he saw that the liveries were those of Mr. Carruthers. Then he struck away down the side of the little declivity, and crossing the railway at another point, attained the main street of the little town. It was market-day. He avoided the inn, and took up a position whence he could watch his mother's approach. There were so many strangers and what Mr. Deans would have called "loafers" about some buying, some selling, and many honestly and unfeignedly doing nothing, that an idler more or less was certain to pass without any comment, and it was not even necessary to keep very wide of the inn. He stood with his hands in his pockets, looking into the window of the one shop in Amherst devoted to the interests of literature, which was profusely decorated with out-of-date valentines, much criticised by flies, and with feebly embossed cards, setting forth the merits of local governesses. At that time prophetic representations of the International Exhibition of '62 were beginning to appeal to the patriotic soul in light blue drawings, with flags innumerable displayed wherever they could be put "handy." George Dallas calmly and gravely surveyed the stock-in-trade, rather distracted by the process of watching the inn door, between which and his position intervened a group of farmers, who were to a man chewing bits of whipeord, and examining samples of corn, which they extracted in a stealthy manner from their breeches-pocket, and displayed grudgingly on their broad palms. On the steps of the inn door were one or two busy groups, and not a man or woman of the number took any notice of Mrs. Carruthers's son. They took very considerable notice of Mrs. Carruthers herself, however, when her carriage stopped; and Mr. Page, the landlord,

actually came out, quite in the old-fashioned style, to open the lady's carriage, and escort her into the house. George watched his mother's tall and elegant figure, as long as she was in sight, with mingled feelings of pleasure, affection, something like real gratitude, and very real bitterness; then he turned, strolled past the inn where the carriage was being put up, and took his way down the main street, to the principal draper's shop. He went in, asked for some gloves, and turned over the packets set before him with slowness and indecision. Presently his mother entered, and took the seat which the shopman, a mild person in spectacles, handed her. She, too, asked for gloves, and, as the shopman turned his back to the counter, rapidly passed a slip of paper to her son. She had written on it, in pencil:

"At Davis's the dentist's, opposite, in ten minutes."

"These will do, thank you. I think you said three and sixpence?" said George to the shopman, who, having placed a number of gloves before Mrs. Carruthers for her selection, had now leisure to attend to his less important customer.

"Yes, sir, three and sixpence, sir. One pair, sir? You'll find them very good wear, sir."

"One pair will do, thank you," said George. He looked steadily at his mother, as he passed her on his way to the door, and once more anger arose, fierce and keen, in his heart—anger, not directed against her, but against his step-father. "Curse him!" he muttered, as he crossed the street, "what right has he to treat me like a dog, and her like a slave? Nothing that I have done justifies—no, by Heaven, and nothing that I could do, would justify—such treatment."

Mr. Davis's house had the snug, cleanly, inflexible look peculiarly noticeable even amid the general snugness, cleanliness, and inflexibility of a country town, as attributes of the residences of surgeons and dentists, and gentlemen who combine both those fine arts. The clean servant who opened the door, looked perfectly cheerful and content. It is rather aggravating, when one is going to be tortured, even for one's ultimate good, to be assured in a tone almost of glee:

"No, sir, master's not in, sir; but he'll be in directly, sir. In the waiting-room, sir." George Dallas not having come to be tortured, and not wishing to see Mr. Davis, bore the announcement with good humour equal to that of the servant, and sat down very contentedly on a high, hard horsehair chair, to await events. Fortune again favoured him; the room had no other occupant; and in about five minutes he again heard the cheerful voice of the beaming girl at the door say,

"No, m'm, master's not in; but he'll be in d'rectly, m'm. In the waiting-room, m'm. There's one gentleman a-waitin', m'm, but master will attend on you first, of course, m'm."

The next moment his mother was in the room, her face shining on him, her arms round him, and the kind words of the truest friend

any human being can be to another, poured into his ear.

"You are looking much better, George," she said, holding him back from her, and gazing fondly into his face. "You are looking brighter, my darling, and softer, and as if you were trying to keep your word to me."

"Pretty well, mother, and I am very thankful to you. But your letter puzzled me. What does it mean? Have you really got the money, and how did you manage to get it?"

"I have not got it, dear," she said, quickly, and holding up her hand to keep him silent, "but it is only a short delay, not a disappointment. - I shall have it in two or three days."

George's countenance had fallen at her first words, but the remainder of the sentence reassured him, and he listened eagerly as she continued:

"I am quite sure of getting it, George. If it does but set you free, I shall not regret the price I have paid for it."

"Tell me what it is, mother," George asked, eagerly. "Stay, you must not sit so close to me."

"I'm not sure that your voice ought to be heard either, speaking so familiarly, tête-à-tête with the important Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings—a personage whose sayings and doings are things of note at Amherst," said Mrs. Carruthers, with a smile, as she took a seat at a little distance, and placed one of the samples of periodical literature strewn about the table, after the fashion of dentists' and surgeons' waiting-rooms, ready to her hand, in case of interruption. Then she laid her clasped hands on the table, and leaned against them, with her clear dark eyes fixed upon her son's face, and her steady voice, still sweet and pure in its tones as in her youth, as she told him what she had done.

"Do you remember, George, that on that wretched night you spoke of my diamonds, and seemed to reproach me that I should wear jewels, while you wanted so urgently but a small portion of their price?"

"I remember, mother," returned George, frowning, "and a beast I was to hint such a thing to you, who gave me all that ever was your own! I hoped you had forgiven and forgotten it. Can it be possible that you have sold— But no; you said they were family jewels!"

"I will tell you. When you had gone away that night, and I was in the ball-room, and later, when I was in my dressing-room alone, and could think of it all again, the remembrance of what you had said tormented me. The jewels you had seen me wearing were, indeed, as I had told you, not my own; nevertheless, the remembrance of all I had ever read about converting jewels into money occupied my mind that night, and occupied it after that night for days and days. One day, Mr. Tatham came to Poynings, and in the evening, being, as he always is, very entertaining, he related an extraordinary story of a client of his. The tale, as he told it, had many particulars, but one caught my attention. The client was a woman of large fortune, who married for love a man much younger than her-

self, a dissipated fellow who broke her fortune, and might have broken her heart, but for his getting killed in riding a steeple-chase. After his timely death, it was discovered, among a variety of dishonourable transactions, that he had stolen his wife's diamonds, with the connivance of her maid; had had them imitated in mock stones by a famous French dealer in false jewellery; and had substituted the false for the real. No suspicion of the fact had ever crossed his wife's mind. The discovery was made by the jeweller's bill for the imitation being found among his papers. This led to inquiry of the dealer, who gave the required information. The moment I heard the story, I conceived the idea of getting you the money you wanted by a similar expedient."

"Oh, mother!"

She lifted one hand with a gesture of caution, and continued, in a voice still lower than before:

"My jewels—at least those I have sold—were my own, George. Those I wore that night, were, as I told you, family diamonds; but Mr. Carruthers gave me, when we were married, a diamond bracelet, and I understood then that it was very valuable. I shrank from such a deception. But it was for you, and I caught at it."

George Dallas sat with his hands over his face, and no more interrupted her by a single word.

"By one or two questions I stimulated Mr. Carruthers's curiosity in the strange story, so that he asked Mr. Tatham several questions, as to where the mock jewels were made, whether they cost much, and, in fact, procured for me all the information I required. That bracelet was the only thing I had of sufficient value for the purpose, because it is expensive to get an imitation of any ornament made of very fine stones, as my bracelet is, and richly set. If the act were still to do, I should do it, George—for you—and still I should feel, as I do most bitterly feel, that in doing it I shamefully deceive my husband!"

Still George Dallas did not speak. He felt keenly the degradation to which he had reduced his mother; but so great and pervading was his bitterness of feeling towards his mother's husband, that when the wrong to *him* presented itself to his consideration, he would not entertain it. He turned away, rose, and paced the room. His mother sighed heavily as she went on.

"George, you know this is not the first time I have suffered through and for you, and that this is the first time I have ever done an act which I dare not avow. I will say no more."

He was passing behind her chair as she spoke, and he paused in his restless walk to kneel down by her, clasp her in his arms, and kiss her. As he rose from his knees, she looked at him with a face made radiant with hope, and with a mother's love.

"This is how it was done, George," she continued. "I wrote to an old friend of mine in Paris, a French lady, once my schoolfellow. I told her I wanted my bracelet matched, in the best manner of imitation jewellery, as our Eng-

lish fashions required two, and I could not afford to purchase another made of real diamonds. I urged the strictest secrecy, and I know she will observe it; for she loves mystery only a little less than she loves dress. She undertook the commission with alacrity, and I expected to have had both the bracelets yesterday."

"What a risk you would have run, mother, supposing an occasion for your wearing the bracelet had arisen!"

"Like Anne of Austria and the studs?" said his mother, with a smile. "But there was no help for it. More deceit and falsehood must have followed the first. If the occasion had arisen, Mr. Carruthers would have questioned me, and I should have said I had sent it to be cleaned, when he would have been angry that I should have done so without consulting him."

"Tyranical old brute!" was George's mental comment.

"All the meanness and all the falsehood was planned and ready, George; but it was needless. Mr. Carruthers was summoned to York, and is still there. It is much for me that the parcel should arrive during his absence. I heard from my friend, the day before I wrote to you, that she was about to send it immediately, and I wrote to you at once. It is to be directed to Nurse Brookes."

"How did you explain *that*, mother?" George asked, quickly.

"More lies, more lies," she answered, sadly, rejoicing in her heart the while to see how he writhed under the words. "I told her what was needful in the way of false explanation, and I made certain of having the bracelets to-day. So I must have done but for a second letter from my friend Madame de Haulleville, to the effect that, having a sudden opportunity of sending the packet to England by a private hand, she had availed herself of it, at the loss of (at most, she writes) a day or two."

"Confound her French parsimony!" said George; "think of the unnecessary risk she makes us run, when I come down here for nothing."

"It is not so much parsimony as precaution, George. And she could know nothing of any risk."

"What is to be done, then?" he asked, in a softer tone.

"Can you not remain at Amherst?" asked his mother. "Have you anything to do which will prevent your remaining here for a day or two? If not, you will be as well here as in London, for there is no danger of Mr. Carruthers seeing you."

"Suppose he did?" George burst out. "Is he the lord and master of all England, including Amherst? Perhaps the sunshine belongs to him, and the fresh air? If I keep away from Poynings, that's enough for him, surely."

Mrs. Carruthers had risen, and looked appealingly at him.

"Remember, George, your misconduct would justify Mr. Carruthers, in the eyes of the world, for the course he has taken towards you; or,"

here she moved near to him, and laid her hand on his arm, "if you refuse to consider *that*, remember that Mr. Carruthers is my husband, and that I love him."

"I will, mother, I will," said George, impetuously. "Graceless, ungrateful wretch that I am! I will never say another word against him. I will remain quietly here, as you suggest. Shall I stay at the inn? Not under my own name; under my not very well known but some day of course widely to be famous pen-name—Paul Ward. Don't forget it, mother, write it down; stay, I'll write it for you. P-a-u-l W-a-r-d." He wrote the name slowly on a slip of paper, which Mrs. Carruthers placed between the leaves of her pocket-book.

"You must go now," she said to him; "it is impossible you can wait here longer. We have been singularly fortunate as it is. When I write, I will tell you whether I can come to you here—in the town, I mean—or whether you shall come to me. I think you will have to come to me. Now go, my darling boy." She embraced him fondly.

"And you, mother?"

"I will remain here a little longer. I have really something to say to Mr. Davis."

He went. Black care went with him, and shame and remorse were busy at his heart. Would remorse deepen into repentance, and would repentance bear wholesome fruit of reformation? That was for the future to unravel. The present had acute stinging pain in it, which he longed to stifle, to crush out, to get away from, anyhow. He loved his mother, and her beautiful earnest face went with him along the dusty road; the unshed tears in her clear dark eyes seemed to drop in burning rain upon his heart; the pleading tones of her sorrowful voice filled all the air. How wicked and wretched, how vain, silly, and insipid, how worthless and vulgar, all his pleasures and pursuits seemed now! A new spirit arose in the wayworn, jaded man; a fresh ambition sprang up in his heart. "It's a wretched, low, mean way of getting free, but I have left myself no choice. I *must* take advantage of what she has done for me, and then I never will wrong her love and generosity again. I will do right, and not wrong; this is my resolution, and I will work it out, *so help me God!*"

He had unconsciously come to a stop at the noble old oak gates, flung hospitably open, of a wide-spreading park, through one of whose vistas a grand old mansion in the most elaborate manner of the Elizabethan style was visible. He looked up, and the beauty of the prospect struck him as if it had been created by an enchanter's wand. He looked back along the road by which he had come, and found that he had completely lost sight of Amherst.

He went a pace or two beyond the gate pillars. A hale old man was employed in nailing up a trailing branch of jessamine against the porch of the lodge.

"Good afternoon, old gentleman. This is a fine place, I fancy."

"Good afternoon, sir. It is a fine place.

You'll not see many finer in Amherst. Would you like to walk through it, sir? You're quite welcome."

"Thank you. I should like to walk through it. I have never been down this way before. What is the name of the place, and to whom does it belong?"

"It is called the Sycamores, sir, and it belongs to Sir Thomas Boldero."

ANTONY PAYNE, CORNISH GIANT.

On the brow of a lofty hill, crested with stag-horned trees, commanding a deep and woodland gorge wherein "the Crooks of Combe" (the curves of a winding river) urge onward to the "Severn Sea," still survive the remains of famous old Stowe; that historic abode of the loyal and glorious Sir Beville, the Bayard of old Cornwall, "sans peur et sans reproche," in the thrilling Stewart wars. No mansion on the Tamar-side ever accumulated so rich and varied a store of association and event. Thither the sons of the Cornish gentry were accustomed to resort, to be nurtured and brought up with the children of Sir Beville Granville and Lady Grace; for the noble knight was literally the "glass wherein" the youth of those ancient times "did dress themselves." There their graver studies were relieved by manly pastime and athletic exercise. Like the children of the Persians, they were taught "to ride, to bend the bow, and to speak the truth." At hearth and hall every time-honoured usage and festive celebration was carefully and reverently preserved. Around the walls branched the massive antlers of the red deer of the moors, the trophies of many a bold achievement with horse and hound. At the buttery-hatch hung a tankard, marked with the guests' and the travellers' peg, and a manchet, flanked with native cheese, stood ready on a trencher for any sudden visitant who might choose to lift the latch; for the Granville motto was, "An open door and a greeting hand." A troop of retainers, servants, grooms, and varlets of the yard, stood each in his place, and under orders to receive with a welcome the unknown stranger, as well as their master's kinsman and friend.

Among these, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, appeared a remarkable personage. He was the son of an old tenant on the estate, who occupied the manor-house of Stratton, a neighbouring town. His parents were of the yeoman rank in life, and possessed no singularity of personal aspect or frame, although both were comely. But Antony, their son, was from his earliest years a wonderful boy. He shot up into preternatural stature and strength. His proportions were so vast, that, when he was a mere lad, his schoolmates were accustomed "to borrow his back," and, for sport, to work out their geography lessons or arithmetic on that broad disc in chalk; so that, to his mother's amazement and dismay,

he more than once brought home, like Atlas, the world on his shoulders, for her to rub out. His strength and skill in every boyish game were marvellous, and, unlike many other large men, his mental and intellectual faculties increased with his amazing growth.

It was Antony Payne's delight to select two of his stoutest companions whom he termed "his kittens," and, with one under each arm, to climb some perilous crag or cliff in the neighbourhood of the sea, "to show them the world," as he said. He was called in the school "Uncle Tony," for the Cornish to this day employ the names "uncle and aunt" as titles of endearment and respect. Another relic of his boyhood is extant still; the country lads, when they describe anything of excessive dimensions, call it, "as long as Tony Payne's foot."

He grew on gradually, and in accurate proportion of sinews and thews, until, at the age of twenty-one, he was taken into the establishment at Stowe. He then measured seven feet two inches without his shoes, and he afterwards added a couple of inches more to his stately growth. Wide-chested, full armed, and pillared, like a rock, on lower limbs of ample and exact symmetry, he would have gladdened the critical eyes of Queen Elizabeth, whose Tudor taste led her to exult in "looking on a man." If his lot had fallen in later days, he might have been hired by some wonder-monger to astonish the provincial mind, or the intellect of cities, as the Cornish Chang. But in good old honest simple-hearted England they utilised their giants, and deemed that when a cubit was added to the stature of a man, it was for some wise, good end, and they looked upon their loftier brother with added honour and respect.

So for many years Payne continued to fulfil his various duties as Sir Beville's chief retainer at Stowe. He it was who was the leader and the authority in every masculine sport. He embowelled and flayed the hunted deer, and carried the carcase on his own shoulders to the hall, where he received as his guerdon the horns and the hide. The antlers, cleansed and polished, were hoisted as a trophy on the panelled wall; and the skins, dressed and prepared, were shaped into a jerkin for his goodly chest. It took the spoils of three full-grown red deer to make the garment complete. His master's sons and their companions, the very pride of the west, who housed and instructed at Stowe, when released from their graver studies, were under his especial charge. He taught them to shoot, and fish, and to handle arms. Tilt-yard and bowling-green, and the hurler's ground, can still be identified at Stowe. In the latter, the poising-place and the mark survive, and a rough block of grauwacke is called to this day "Payne's cast;" it lies full ten paces beyond the reach whereto the ordinary players could "put the stone."

It is said that one Christmas-eve the fire

languished in the hall. A boy with an ass had been sent to the woodland for logs, and the driver loitered on his homeward way. Lady Grace lost patience, and was displeased. All at once a sudden outcry was heard at the gate, and Sir Beville's Giant appeared with the loaded animal on his mighty back. He threw down his burden in triumph at the hearth-side, shouting merrily, "Ass and fardel! Ass and fardel for my lady's yule!" Another time he strode along the path from Kilkhampton village to Stowe with a bacon-hog of three hundred-weight thrown across his shoulders, and merely because a taunting butcher had doubted his strength for the feat. Among the excellences of Sir Beville's Giant, it is told of him that he was by no means clumsy or uncouth, as men of unusual size sometimes are, but as nimble, and elastic, and as capable of swift and dexterous movement as a light and muscular man. Added to this, his was a strong and acute intellect; so happy also in his language, and of such a ready wit, that he was called by a writer of the last century, for his resemblance, in these points only, to Shakespeare's knight, "the Falstaff of the West."

But a great and sudden change was about to come over the happy halls of Stowe. The king and his parliament were at fatal strife; and there could be but one place in the land for the true-hearted and chivalrous Sir Beville, and that was at his royal master's side. The well-known rallying cry went through the hills and valleys of Cornwall, "Granville's up," and the hearts and hands of many a noble knight and man-at-arms turned towards old Stowe. Mounted messengers rode to and fro. Strange and stalwart forms arrived to claim a place in the ranks. Retainers were enrolled day and night; and the smooth sward of the bowling-green and the Fawn's Paddock were dinted by the hoofs of horses and the tread of serried men. Foremost among these scenes we find, as body-guard of his master, the bulky form of Antony Payne. He marshalled and manœuvred the rude levies from the western mines, "the underground men." He served out arms and rations, and established order, by the mere terror of his presence and strength, among the wild and mixed multitude that gathered "for the king and the land."

Instead of the glad and hospitable scenery of former times, Stowe became in those days like a garrison surrounded by a camp. At last, one day tidings arrived that the battalions of the parliament, led by Lord Stamford, were on their way northwards, and not many miles off. A picked and goodly company marched forth from the avenue of Stowe, and among them Payne, on his Cornish cob Samson, of pure Guinhill breed. The next day, eight miles towards the south, the battle of Stratton-hill was fought and won by the royal troops. The Earl of Stamford was repulsed and fled; bequeathing by a strange mischance his own name, although the defeated commander, to the field of fight. It is called to this day Stamford-hill. Sir Beville returned

that night to Stowe, but his giant remained with some other soldiers to bury the dead. He had caused certain large trenches to be laid open, each to hold ten bodies side by side. There he and his followers carried in the slain. On one occasion they had lain down nine corpses, and Payne was bringing in another, tucked under his arm, like one of "the kittens" of his schoolboy days, when all at once the supposed dead man was heard pleading earnestly with him, and expostulating, "Surely you wouldn't bury me, Mr. Payne, before I am dead?" "I tell thee, man," was the grim reply, "our trench was dug for ten, and there's nine in already; you must take your place." "But I can't dead, I say; I haven't done living yet; be massyful, Mr. Payne; don't ye hurry a poor fellow into the earth before his time." "I won't hurry thee: I mean to put thee down quietly and cover thee up, and then thee canst die at thy leisure." Payne's purpose, however, was kinder than his speech. He carried his suppliant, carefully, to his own cottage, not far off, and charged his wife to stanch, if possible, her husband's rebellious blood. The man lived, and his descendants are among the principal inhabitants of the town of Stratton to this day.

That same year, the battle of Lansdown, near Bath, was fought. The forces of the parliament prevailed, and Sir Beville nobly died. Payne was still at his side, and when his master fell, he mounted young John Granville, a youth of sixteen, whom he had always in charge, on his father's horse, and led the Granville troop into the fight. A letter which the faithful retainer wrote to his lady at Stowe still survives. It breathes, in the quaint language of the day, a noble strain of sympathy and homage. Thus it ran:

"Honoured Madam. Ill news flieth apace. The heavy tidings no doubt hath already travelled to Stowe that we have lost our blessed master by the enemy's advantage. You must not, dear lady, grieve too much for your noble spouse. You know, as we all believe, that his soul was in heaven before his bones were cold. He fell, as he did often tell us he wished to die, in the great Stewart cause, for his country and his king. He delivered to me his last commands, and with such tender words for you and for his children as are not to be set down with my poor pen, but must come to your ears upon my best heart's breath. Master John, when I mounted him on his father's horse, rode him into the war like a young prince, as he is, and our men followed him with their swords drawn and with tears in their eyes. They did say they would kill a rebel for every hair of Sir Beville's beard. But I bade them remember their good master's word when he wiped his sword after Stamford fight; how he said, when their cry was, 'Stab and slay!' 'Halt! men; God will avenge!' I am coming down with the mournfullest load that ever a poor servant did bear, to bring the great heart that is cold to Kirkhampton vault. O!

my lady, how shall I ever brook your weeping face? But I will be trothful to the living and to the dead.

"These, honoured Madam, from thy saddest, truest Servant,
"ANTONY PAYNE."

At the Restoration, the Stowe Giant reappears upon the scene, in attendance on his young master, John Granville. Sir Beville's son had been instrumental in the return of the king, and had received from Charles the Second largesse of money, great offices, and the earldom of Bath. Among other places of trust, he was appointed Governor of the Garrison at Plymouth. There Payne received the appointment of Halberdier of the Guns, and the king, who held him in singular favour, commanded his portrait to be painted by the court artist, Sir Godfrey Kneller. The fate of this picture was one of great vicissitude. It hung in state for some years in the great gallery at Stowe; thence, when that mansion was dismantled, at the death of the Earl of Bath, it was removed to Penheale, another manor-house of the Granvilles, in Cornwall; but it ceased to be highly esteemed, from the ignorance of the people and the oblivion of years, inasmuch so that when Gilbert, the Cornish historian, travelled through the county to collect materials for his work, he discovered the portrait, rolled up in an empty room, and described by the farmer's wife as "a carpet with the effigy of a large man upon it." It was a gift to her husband, she said, from the landlord's steward, and she was glad to sell it as she did for eight pounds! When Gilbert died, his collection of antique curiosities was sold by auction at Devonport, where he lived, and this portrait of Payne, which had been engraved as the frontispiece to the second volume of his History of Cornwall, was bought by a stranger, who was passing through the town, and who had strolled in to look at the sale, at the price of forty guineas. The value had been apparently enhanced by oil, and varnish, and frame. This stranger proved to be a connoisseur in paintings; he conveyed it to London, and there it was ascertained to be one of the masterpieces of Kneller; it was resold for the enormous sum of eight hundred pounds. This picture, or even the engraving in Gilbert's work, reveals still to the eye the Giant of Old Stowe, "in his natural presentment" as he lived. There he stands before the eye, a stalwart soldier of the guard. One hand is placed upon a cannon, and the other wields the tall halberd of his rank and office as yeoman of the guns. By a strange accident this very weapon and a large flask or flagon, sheathed in wicker-work, which is said to have held "Antony's allowance," a gallon of wine, and which is placed in the picture on the ground at his feet—both these relics of the time and the man are now in the possession of the writer of this article, in the Vicarage House, near Stowe. It was in Plymouth garrison, and in his later days, that an event is recorded of Payne, which testifies that even after long years "his eye had not grown dim, neither was his natural force

abated." The revolution had come and gone, and William and Mary had been enthroned. At the mess-table of the regiment in garrison, on the anniversary of the day when Charles the First had been beheaded, a sub-officer of Payne's own rank had ordered a calf's head to be served up in a "William and Mary dish." This, in those days of new devotion to the House of Hanover, was a coarse and common annual mockery of the beheaded king; and delf, with the faces of these two sovereigns for ornament, was a valued ware (the writer has one large dish). When Payne entered the room, his comrades pointed out to him the insulting and practical jest, to him, too, most offensive, for he was a Stuart man. With a ready and indignant gesture he threw out of the window the symbolic platter and its contents.

A fierce quarrel ensued, and a challenge, and at break of day Payne and his antagonist fought with swords on the ramparts. After a strong contest—for the offender was a master of his weapon—Payne ran his adversary through the sword-arm and disabled him. He is said to have accompanied the successful thrust with the taunting shout, "There's sauce for thy calf's head!" When the strong man at last began to bow himself down at the approach of one stronger than he, the giant of Stowe obtained leave to retire. He returned to Stratton, his native place, and found shelter and repose in the very house and chamber wherein he was born.

After his death, neither the door nor the stairs would afford egress for the large and cofined corpse. The joists had to be sawn through, and the floor lowered with rope and pulley, to enable the giant to pass out towards his mighty grave. Relays of strong bier-men carried him to his rest, and the bells of the tower, by his own express desire, "chimed him home." He was buried outside the southern wall of Stratton church. When the writer was a boy, the sexton one day broke, by accident, through the side wall of a vast but empty sepulchre. Many went to see the sight, and there, marked by a stone in the wall, was a vault, like the tomb of the Anakim, large enough in these days for the interment of three or four of our degenerate dead. But it was empty, desolate, and bare. No mammoth bones nor mysterious relics of the unknown dead. A massive heap of silent dust!

GHOSTS' GARMENTS.

"I CALCULATE from a slight but smart glance at your physical peculiarities that you don't believe in ghosts, youngster."

Now, besides being called "youngster"—a thing very irritating when you can catch hold of your moustache without disfiguring your upper lip—there is something very irritating to an Englishman in being addressed thus summarily and personally by an entire stranger. We, the only occupants of a first-class carriage on the North-Western Railway, had only just emerged from the first bridge after leaving

Euston-square station. I, with a dignity which would convince most people of my majority, drew myself up to my full height (and I sit high, though not at all on account of the shortness of my legs), and replied that I was glad that so short an acquaintance had been sufficient to assure him of my freedom from any such ridiculous superstition.

"Ha!" said the stranger, with a strong nasal twang, "so that's how the land lies, is it? Wal! Then I reckon that the sooner you begin to believe, the better, and if you've got such a thing as a cigar about you, I'll commence your eddication at once."

"Thank you," said I; "here is a cigar, but I prefer my present state of ignorance and incredulity."

"Very well rounded that, for a youngster," retorted my tormentor. "Dr. Johnson didn't make his dixonary for nothin'; I see; but still, as long as you don't believe in ghosts, your eddication ain't the thing quite, neither."

By this time he had selected the biggest cigar from my case, had lighted it with a match which he struck on his trousers, and had begun to smoke it, rolling it from one side of his mouth to the other, and regarding me with a cool impertinence which stifled me with indignation.

"Wal!" he continued, after a puff or two, "it's a rank Britisher, is this cigar; but it was the best you'd got, so I won't grumble. Now stick another in your own mouth and then I'll begin your eddication."

I had intended to smoke, and I was not to be stopped by any false notion of dignity: so I did as he requested, and resigned myself to my fate. No sooner had I done so than he exclaimed, "Now that's what I call comfort!" smacked his legs and his fingers, and evinced such a high state of uncouth hilarity, that I began to be afraid I was locked up with a lunatic.

"Ha!" he cried, snapping his fingers, "I'll make your hair stand on end, I will, spite of all your pomatum and bandoline—and your legs won't hurt by a little stretching neither. Air you ready?"

Hoping at least to draw off his attention from my personal appearance, by inducing him to begin a story at once, I nodded, and he commenced:

"Wal, I'm only a-thinkin' which of 'em it shall be. I've got one story as kills outright; but I want to cross to-night, and being found with a corpse might be inconvenient, so I'll let you off that. I've another, as mostly brings on fits; but this carriage is narrow for fits. And I've another, as completely takes away the breath, 'cept the story's told slow, which I ain't clever at. And I've another—well, you're a good-natured fellow, you air, and so I'll tell it you; it's only dangerous in heart disease."

"My heart is perfectly sound," I said, in as steady a voice as I could assume.

"Wal, then! Here goes. About two months ago I was travelling by express from Dublin to Cork, meanin' to cross to my native land in a sudden bust of affection towards an old uncle

o' mine who I heerd was about to leave this world for a better; and I was a-moralising on the shortness of life, and consoling myself with reflexions on the admirable arrangements of Providence, which don't allow rich uncles to take their ile springs with 'em, when I had the most extraordinary adventure with a faymale ghost that I remember in all my experience.

"I was all alone in the compartment with my luggage, which consisted of a male portmanteau, a faymale trunk and a bandbox as I had promised my old woman to bring her some finery from Paris. The bandbox was none of your pasteboard flimsies, but a true Parisian, made of shingle; so I wrapped it up in my travelling rug. I put it under my head, and I went fast asleep. I'm a sound sleeper. Many a time have I gone to sleep when poggy-fishing, and slept all night in spite of the bullfrogs a-leaping and a-croaking all over me, but I never had such a restless nap in my life as in that compartment. First of all I had a tickling in my nose, as if a drunken centipede was a-trying to open his door with a toothpick. In the ensuing irritation I lifted my head, when—whish! went my travelling rug. Still, I didn't rouse up definite, but snored on. Presently, the irritation increased, and I lifted my head again, when, away went bandbox and all. I said to myself, 'Now they'll be satisfied, I hope' (for I knew it was ghosts, fast enough, being used to 'em); and sure enough, whatever it was left me alone awhile; I only heard a noise in my sleep like a mouse in the faymale trunk. Presently, however, I come aware of pinchin' going on in various portions of myself. I am averse to pinchin', natural, and I twitched and twitched, determined to sleep it out. But the pinchin' increasin' from the desultory to the vicious, I knew it wasn't any good, so I opened my eyes and sat up, and, bless my soul, if there wasn't a faymale figger of exceeding beauty dressed complete in my wife's garments. Parisian bonnet with yaller ribbons, bright-green velvet jacket trimmed with red gimp, blue slippers and pink silk stockings, complete! And if I didn't stare, why this cigar's tobacco, that's all!"

He paused a moment, and looked at me with a most evil expression of enjoyment; I let his impertinence pass without the smallest remark, and he continued:

"Wal, I wasn't skeered a fig, but looked at her fixed, took out a pipe (I smokes pipes usual), and asked her if she objected to my lightin' up? 'Not a bit,' she answered, quite pleasant, and she smiled, opening her lips, through which I saw the back of the carriage."

"The back of the carriage?"

"Yes. Ghosts is hollow, and got no teeth, no bones, no hair, nothin' but flesh and skin, and only the very outside o' that: a sort of nothing without innards. If she hadn't had my wife's bonnet on, her head, with the compartment light over it, would a looked like the globe of a paraffine lamp afore it's lit; but when the mouth's shut, you can't see through; it's only semi-transparent, like ground glass, and if it hadn't been one of

those new-fangled hats, like a captain's biscuit with strings, I could only see the cushions at the back through a chance chink in the straw. As it was, I saw three buttons and puffs complete."

"Nonsense," I said. I was delighted when a question suggested itself which I thought would prove a poser to the man. "But," said I, "if ghosts are made of such slight material, how can you account for your friend's supporting the weight of the bonnet with 'yaller' ribbons, the velvet jacket with the gimp trimmings, and the rest of it?"

"Very clever for you, youngster. That was what had precisely puzzled me about ghosts for a long time, as it has puzzled most incredulous writers on the subject, old and new. Ghosts of clothes, they says, air ridiculous, and so I thought; though, being natural of a religious temperament, I didn't say so, and if the clothes ain't ghostly, they can't be real, 'cause the immaterial couldn't support a paper bonnet, let alone crinoline. Such was the state of my feelin' on the subject, when this lady figger started 'em from their dormant apathy. 'Here's a chance of settling the question,' says I to myself, 'as may never occur again. Here's a faymale ghost, as I knows a ghost, 'cause I've seen the buttons of the carriage through her bump o' philoprogenitiveness, and she's wearin' clothes, as I know—all real and material clothes, because I've paid to the tune of five hundred dollars for 'em; and this here immaterial ghost is wearin' these material clothes, as well as if she was made of Bessemer steel. Here's an opportunity,' said I, 'of asking a question—'"

"Now then, my friend," said I, "I am impatient to hear the answer." For there was a want of alacrity in his tone, and a falling off in his spirit, and he had taken his cigar from his mouth and was studying the ceiling: all of which, I thought, betokened that either his invention or his memory was failing him.

"Wal," he replied, "there is one lesson I never have forgot, 'cause I had to write it seventy-seven times in one mornin', at the age of six: it was Patience is a *Verteu*, and the sooner you lay it to heart, the better for your wife, if you ever have one: which, looking consumptive, you won't, perhaps, so it don't matter much."

I again took no notice of his gross want of delicacy.

"Wal, you're beginning to learn, I see," he went on, "so I'll humour you. 'Feminine spirit,' said I, 'would you oblige me and the live world in general by informin' me how it is you appear in clothes?' 'It's like your impudence to ask the question,' she replied, turnin' green—which is ghost for blushin'; 'you wouldn't dare put the question to a live lady. But all of you on that side the dust seem to think a spirit hasn't got any feelin's whatever. I've heerd questions asked, when I've been forced to lay up a-while in a table, as made me ashamed of ever havin' lived.' 'I'm sure I beg your pardon,' said I, feelin' very small lager in-

deed, 'but I meant no harm. P'raps I should a said, how do you manage to bear the weight of 'em?' 'Why, do you think we haven't any strength,' she said; 'then how do you imagine we turn tables?' 'Trew,' I answered, feeling I had met my match for the first time in my life, 'but that didn't occur to me.' 'Shake hands, if you doubt me,' said she, holding out as pretty a little gloved hand as it ever was my fortune to see. Now it's rather a ticklish crisis in a man's existence when a ghost asks him to shake hands, but I wasn't going to be afraid of a human soap-bubble, especially being faymale. So I shook hands with her, and got such a grip as I never had, except from Heenan. 'Now,' she said, a-holding out the pretty hand again, 'give a poke at that with your finger.' I giv' a poke, and the glove tumbled all of a heap on the floor, as if I'd knocked it off a peg; and there were five as pretty little bare white semi-transparent fingers as were ever manufactured out of opal glass. Wal, I was skeered a little at that, though I might a known how it would be if I'd reckoned; and I said, handing her the glove, which she put on all at once without unbuttonin', 'Excuse my asking an impertinent question, but where on airth do you inflated nothings get your strength from?' 'Will!' she answered, with another smile, 'will and sperit!' 'Oh, indeed,' said I. 'And what might you mean by sperit?' 'Sperit,' she replied, 'is a kinder gas, which blows us out to shape, like balloons.' 'Oh, indeed,' says I. 'You're blown out like balloons, air you?' 'Yes,' she says, 'we air; and if you don't break our *film*, which you can't when we don't wish, we are as strong as you felt just now.' 'Oh, indeed,' said I, not understanding quite puspicious, 'and when I knocked that glove off just now, did I break the *film*?' 'I *rather* guess you did,' she said; 'it's only just healed up.' 'Then, madam,' said I, thinkin' I'd caught her tripping, for these ghosts most of 'em lie like everlastin', 'if you're blown out like a balloon, how is it you didn't collapse right away? It wasn't *will*, was it?' 'No,' she answered, quite ready. 'I'd given that up; it's the nature of the sperit not to.' 'How so?' said I, thinkin' it rather a faymale reason. 'Why,' she said, 'sperit and air is like ile and water, and won't mix; you can stir 'em as hard as you like, but they won't mix.' 'Oh, indeed!' said I again, puzzlin' my head for another question. For mind you, youngster, whenever you meet with a ghost, ask 'em questions, and never leave off. They're compelled to answer them out of politeness, and I will say ghosts are pretty mannered as a rule. But once let 'em out of harness, and they always run to their own stones, like a horse to his stable, and there's no stopping 'em; and of all bores, I guess a ghost's life tops 'em, they're all so long and dreffal melancholy. But she was politeness itself, was this young sperit. Seeing me a-puzzling what to say next, she asked me with unusual delicacy whether I had any more questions to ask her, and just at that moment one

rushed into my head with such impetuosity as knocked my pipe clean out of my mouth. 'Wal, as you ask me,' I said, 'I have just one or two or so. You were speakin' of lying up in a table. What did you mean by that? Were you sick?' 'No,' she said, 'that isn't the reason; we sperits are never sick. *It was because I hadn't any clothes on.* I was lying spread out most uncomfortable in the woodwork of this kerridge, till you was asleep, and I could dress myself.' 'Why didn't you get into one of the cushions?' said I. 'There wasn't room,' she answered; 'these cushions on this line are all loose, and I couldn't get into two without solution of continuity, which is dreadfully painful for a ghost, and very dangerous. Why, I remember a friend of mine who did that, and the passengers took one of the cushions to play cards on, and then another, each giving up his seat in turn; and what with changing partners, and putting down the cushions the wrong way, and one thing and another, one half of him didn't know where the other half had got to, and, as they both began searching one for the other at the same time, they were near a week before they got together, and then he kicked himself three times in the eye before he found the join.' 'Wal,' said I, ready with another question this time, 'are all ghosts equally ill-provided with clothing?' 'All,' she replied, 'except those that are buried in clothes, and *they* don't last long. Ghosts used to go about in their winding-sheets, but it won't do now. A young ghost soon learns that. I had mine torn to rags the first night, and had to get into my own tombstone—the greatest indignity a ghost has to suffer. And even them that have dresses haven't the right sort. A friend of mine was buried in her bridal dress; but she got so chaffed about it, that she left it off after a week.' 'I suppose you can find clothes generally, can't you?' said I. 'Yes, if a ghost is not over-particular and not *lazy*,' she answered. 'You see, we only want them at night, not being visible by day, even to one another; but it's very awkward sometimes when we are obliged to put on the clothes you livin' bein's have just taken off, for if you want them in the night we have to evacuate in a hurry, and creep into any refuge we can find, and that's the explanation of many of those stories of crockery falling down—not but what some ghosts like a bit of mischief sometimes, but they are the worst sort. Now, I remember——' 'Excuse me,' said I, interrupting her, 'but what do you mean by *lazy* ghosts?' 'Them that don't care about going about decent,' said she; 'they are the sort that mostly fills your furniture. *They* don't care, as long as they are safe in the leg of a table, and they have no sense of decency whatever; they crowd together anyhow, and never put on clothes from one year's end to another. They have greatly increased of late, having got a new pleasure in duping the living; but they are down upon by all respectable ghosts, and they go by name of *casuals*.' 'You are a respectable ghost, I presume?' said I. 'Of course I'm

respectable,' she replied. 'I allus go about at night well dressed, if I can; but allus dressed. Not but what I am put to straits occasional. The other night I was staying, on bisness, at an old castle on the Rhine, and there was no faymale wardrobe there whatever; but I found a chest up-stairs full of queer old dresses, and I had to fix myself up in them as best I could. I met the old baron as I was a goin' down-stairs, and nearly frightened him into fits. I saw he sent an account of it to a paper, in which he swears he had a visit from his great-grandmother. How I laughed to be sure, for my bisness had nothin' to do with the old gentleman at all.' '*Bisness?*' I says, catching a clue. 'Do you have bisness?' I saw I had made a mistake at once, as she began shakin' her head from one side to the other like a pendulum turned the wrong way up. 'Ah,' she said, 'I have; but our bisness is punishment. We have to go about all over the world, tracin' the history right away threw, of all our sins. Some of our sins die out at once, but some little things we never think twice of at the time of committin' go rolling on like snowballs for ever. I've only got two left now. One of them is a lie I made a child of mine tell to get me out of a scrape with his father, which has already led to two murders, a suicide, and frauds without number; I don't know when that will die, but it's not active at the present moment. The other, on which I'm travelling now, is in consequence of the way I left my property. I left it to a distant relation, who was a spendthrift, and every penny he spent ill, I have had to watch the effects of; but it's pretty well worn out, as a great deal of it has passed into charities, which relieves me. Indeed, the last evil done with the money was by the housekeeper of that baron on the Rhine. The son of the man the property was left to, is now dyin' of gout, the pro-duce of port wine bought with part of his father's fortune. I must be in at his death, and then I think there'll be only seven and sixpence-halfpenny left.' 'Where are you off to now?' I asked her. 'To Americay,' she answered. 'But what brings you here in this carriage?' I thought you sperits had a quicker way of transit.' 'By day we fly through the air, being invisible, but not by night; and the man whose death I am to be in at, will die before morning. By night we are obliged to travel dressed, and so can only go by mortal conveyances.' 'But how ever will you get to Americay in that time?' 'Ah, I forgot to mention it, but we can go by telegraph. I should have gone the whole way by telegraph, but the line between Dublin and Valencia is broke. Now, however, I guess I can go through. Just be good enough to turn your face aside one moment.'

"I did so, and I heard a rustle of drapery. After waiting a minute, I looked;—and darned if my wife's togs weren't lying all in a heap on the floor, and not a ghost of a ghost to be seen. I will say that for her, that, except the gloves were a bit stretched, the clothes weren't

damaged a cent. Now, youngster, this is my Station, and if you don't believe in ghosts by this time, it's my opinion you never will."

HOW NOT TO DO IT.

ELEVEN years ago, some highly humorous papers on the Reorganisation of the Civil Service were published by authority. There had been some awkward charges of idleness, incompetence, and waste of the public money; impertinent people were holding indignation meetings, and passing comments in the newspapers; facetious stories concerning ruler-balancing and Peter Dick-whistling in public offices were told in the House of Commons; and the shining lights of our civil service were called upon to report how such scandals could be avoided, and how the tone of their profession could be improved. The shining lights rose to the occasion, and their aggregated labours were published in a blue book, which received more attention than is commonly bestowed upon those works of imagination. There never was such a dreadful state of things as stood revealed. The writers, who were nearly all holders of comfortable government posts, drew such a picture of the system under which they had officially lived, moved, and had their being, that one felt personally grateful to them for not having succumbed to the evil influences of their youth. The almost unanimous cry was for greater talent and more energy in the subordinate ranks. The "ablest and most ambitious youth in the country" were, it was almost pathetically insisted, drafted into the open professions rather than into our government offices; and a change was advocated which should offer to energy and enterprise their proper reward. One of the ablest papers in this direction was written by a gentleman who assisted in the great poor-law inquiry of 1832, and who proved by implication the Poor-law Department to be the one to which the rest should look for emulation and advice. The charges brought against the civil service generally, were, he admitted, true; but, amid the wilderness of indolence and misdoing, this model office proudly reared its head for the rest to look at and become hale and well. The cost of this favoured department was shown to be most moderate when its marvellous organisation was considered, and its branches were proved to be so wonderfully fitted to each other, as to command our admiration, if only as a specimen of highly finished administrative art.

Some curious questions suggested themselves, it is true, as to the good wrought by this highly finished mechanism. Deaths from starvation in the streets; a torpid mass of poverty festering through the country; old and feeble men and women, and young and helpless children, both preferring death to the cruel mercies of the department; a system of rating so unjust as to be little better than legalised theft, and an organised jobbery so shameless as to defeat ex-

posure, were among its most familiar handiworks. We knew the poor to be ill-treated, and we knew the money raised in their name by those who "carried the bag" to be more than sufficient for its purpose; and we wanted information as to the terrible gap between material and result. In place of this, readers of the essay in question learnt that the wisest of all possible laws, and the most perfect of all possible departments, was the one having its head-quarters at Whitehall; and that so long as a numerous and costly staff drew up and consolidated orders and regulations, issued dignified minutes, and generally glorified itself, the Poor-law Board must be regarded as the one government establishment without blame.

Let us ask, on the strength of eleven years' experience, whether any sane person believes the present condition of the poor of England could by any possibility be worse, if this wonderful department had been then swept off the face of the earth? Has it not given a tacit, but consistent, support to evil? And would not the volunteer apostles of humanity have performed their Christian task earlier but for the solemn sham of inspections, minutes, and reports which have been kept up? Had the whole of our workhouses, and the entire machinery of guardians, Bumbles, and boards been left without nominal control, their abuses would have been remedied long since. It is the pretence of an authority properly exercised which has wrought the nameless, shameless evils the country shudders at, and which Mr. Ernest Hart and his colleagues have dragged to light. It is this pretence which must be exposed and denounced until it gives way like the worthless sham it is, and a better system, and a more wholesome discipline, rise up in its stead. Recent events augur favourably for this end. With a fatuity which, we will hope, precedes dissolution, the department has turned a deaf ear to the signs of the times. After many fits of spasmodic indignation, the spirit of the country has been at last thoroughly roused, and a reform which shall prevent venal, cruel, and ignorant jobbers recklessly torturing the suffering and the helpless, is firmly insisted on. No one out of this office has the hardihood to pretend that our workhouses are properly managed, that guardians are sensible, humane, or just, or that sick paupers are otherwise than shamefully treated. For the Workhouse Infirmary Association has succeeded in rousing the attention of the country, and a general impression is abroad that reform must be speedy and complete. The Board has, however, survived so many storms of popular indignation, that it scarcely believes even now that the nation is in earnest, or that its very existence as a department depends upon its conforming to the increased humanity of the age. Pandering to the interests of the vulgar hucksters who rule our metropolitan parishes is thought a safer mode of meeting the difficulty than honestly confessing what one president, at all events, has admitted to be just. True to

what seems to be the instinct of officials as well as ostriches, the departmental head is pushed eagerly into the sand. Never root out or care about an evil you can hide; always consider the traditions of your department before your duty to the public, and regard as your natural enemies the people who do ought to disturb the serene routine you love. Such has been the unwritten code which every poor-law officer has been called upon to obey, and under which paupers have died miserably, and guardians run riot. The defective controlling power of the central authority was made the plea for its being utterly useless as a protection against parochial abuses; and neither president, parliament, nor public opinion has been hitherto strong enough to struggle with the passive obstructiveness of the permanent officials who are in reality the Board.

Let us suppose this department to be presided over by a statesman of experience, whose name is associated with some of the most beneficial reforms of the day, and who commenced his public life by fighting the people's battle against the patrician phalanx he had left. Let us endow this statesman with great sensitiveness, a keen intellect, and a strong will, and then let us ask how it is that such a man has been made to appear indifferent or callous to the sufferings of the poor? Peer a little below the surface, and we find the jealousies and opposition of a handful of red-tape subordinates to be at the root of the anomaly; and that their mischievous power for evil has impeded the usefulness of one whom all the influence of the would-be conservators of the corn-laws failed to daunt.

The more intelligent of parish guardians admit the unworthiness of the local assemblies on which they sit, and are anxious for properly constituted advice and control in the emergencies constantly arising. The typical guardian—the fellow of coarse mind, low habits, and doubtful honour; the pot-house orator who, ignorant of self-restraint, rounds blatant periods on the sacred principle of self-government; the hard, narrow, cruel nature which regards a pauper as an offensive reptile, with a capacity for eating and drinking “at this ’ere parish’s expense;” and the plausible, shallow word-monger, who conceals the most rapacious instincts under a flux of verbiage—all these men tremble at the prospect of losing the power for evil they have exercised so long. “’Ow they’ve been a ’ritin’ of us down, sir!” was the greeting of the respected chairman of an East-end Board of Guardians, when alluding in my presence to comments publicly passed on his refusing shelter to the houseless. “This ’ere’s a question of money; it’s money, money, money; humanity to the poor, interest in the sick! ’Umbug, gentlemen, ’umbug! They want to take the power out of our ’ands and put it into their own, that’s where it is,” formed the peroration of a speech I heard delivered at St. James’s Hall. Indiscriminate abuse had been poured on every one known to object to the summary and cruel slaughter of sick paupers. Medical men of position, ladies

through whose disinterested efforts the last moments of the dying had been soothed, ministers of religion, legislators, and journalists, all fell under the ban. But the chief vial of this windy wrath was reserved for an officer of the Poor-law Department, who had presumed to regard “inspection” as a serious duty instead of an official farce. Insulting comparisons were drawn between his conduct and the representative of routine who accompanied him on his last official rounds; his motives were impugned and his opinions scoffed at; while by an ingenious and highly honourable device it was sought to convict him of the unpardonable sin of bringing discredit upon parochial management.

When the Workhouse Infirmary Association* was in course of formation, Mr. H. B. Farnall, the metropolitan inspector of workhouses under the Board, was invited to meet its promoters privately, and to corroborate or refute facts already in their possession. It is to the honour of Mr. Villiers, the then president of the Poor-law Board, that he gave his ready acquiescence; and on a given day Mr. Farnall made a brief statement on the stipulation that it should only reach members of the association, and as a matter of official etiquette be considered private and confidential so far as its origin was concerned. Mark the exquisite working of the best of all possible government offices! The cabinet minister who was responsible in parliament for the department he ruled over, and the official whose life was spent in a vain struggle against flagrant abuses, determined to perform a public duty out of the circle of routine. But the official traditions were against this perfectly original proceeding, and the official wrath showed itself by coalescing with the guardians. The honorary secretary of the association was favoured by a visit, a few days afterwards, from a polite gentleman who announced himself as from the Poor-law Board, and who asked for a copy of Mr. Farnall’s statement for a gentleman high in office there, who “takes a great interest in this subject, and who wishes to help the association’s benevolent efforts.” A copy was parted with unsuspectingly, and was, according to preconcerted arrangement, promptly handed to an irate guardian, who had it printed and given away as a handbill in the streets. Every one of the damning facts it contained was to be found in the published blue books, but it was their being given in a succinct form to the philanthropic people working for reform that constituted Mr. Farnall’s offence. No attempt was made to disprove his statements. It was not only the so-called violation of official confidence, but real desire to aid others in effecting good, which made Mr. Farnall and Mr. Villiers unpopular. The parochial irritation ended for the moment in silly insolence of speech; but the outraged department bided its time, and has had full revenge. Mr. Farnall had already made enemies through studying the

* See THE NEW HUMANE SOCIETY, vol. xv., p. 177.

interests of the country rather than the ease of his department; and his candid reports and outspoken speeches marked him as a dangerous ally. The grand principle of How not to do it was felt to be in jeopardy. Reports could be shelved, adverse legal opinions given, obstructive letters written in the name of the Board, and the president's wishes for reform and action thwarted, so long as the chief and the inspector stood alone. But with an independent organisation, and the voice of public opinion at their backs, it seemed clear that improvement would be inaugurated, unless prompt action were taken to prevent it. Just as the department was pondering ruefully on these things—just as its worst fears were on the eve of realisation, and it was about being made useful, Mr. Villiers went out of office with his party. The rest was easy.

With a ministry anxious to keep power, and a new broom wishful to show his independence, what so simple as throwing over the Jonah whose presence threatened the quiet comfort of the ship? The guardians were propitiated and the department appeased by the banishment to a distant province of an official who had presumed to perform his duty; two inspectors were appointed in his place, both of whom had to acquire the special knowledge he had spent years in gaining; the whole dreary business of examining, reporting, and minuting, are being gone through again, and How not to do it sits in fancied security on its throne. The result may be readily imagined. The new inspectors told the public the other day that Clerkenwell workhouse is unfit for the purpose to which it is put, *but* that the accommodation is as good as can be expected "under the circumstances." As a comment upon this, we find Mr. Farnall giving evidence before a committee of the House of Commons, in 1861, as to this workhouse, thus:

"It is very old, and they tell me they are about to build another. It would tumble down at this moment if there were not at least two hundred pounds' worth of wooden props all round it."

When pressed for his opinion upon the metropolitan guardians elected under local acts, the same witness remarked: "My experience obliges me to say that they resist any order, almost any suggestion made to them . . . and they submit only when you have gone to law with them, and they are beaten." It is for uttering such home-truths as these, and for the spirit they imply, that Mr. Farnall has been sacrificed to the exigencies of political party, and the caballing of the department he has served in spite of itself. Perhaps the essayists who eleven years ago effected a radical change in the mode of appointing to the civil service, will tell us "how the most able and ambitious youth of the country" comport themselves now they are caught; and what care is taken to make their services available to the country. We have here a case in which zeal and ability are the rocks upon which a promising official career has split, and where an

indolent acquiescence in things as they are is the recognised principle of success. Apart from the dreadful fact that the sum total of human suffering is increased—for guardians have already passed resolutions "to do nothing until they hear what the new inspectors say"—the lords and gentlemen who are good enough to manage this nation's affairs will find food for reflection here. A public servant has been deliberately punished for efficiency, his late chief and the public are fully aware of the fact, and the department complacently folds its optimist hands, and declares, with tongue in cheek, that things are certain to come right, if they are only left to themselves.

OLD DEVONSHIRE FARM LIFE.

Was it not a joyful day in the old old time, nearer three-quarters of a century than half a century ago, when a certain jolly-faced farmer from Dartmoor came to my father's door! I ran out to meet him, and, squeezing my hand as if it were in a vice, he shouted, "Here be I, and here be the hoss, and there be the saddle, and ban't ee ready?" Upon which, running in as fast as my little legs could carry me, and out again with the "varel," change of linen which my careful mother had tied up in a pocket-handkerchief to wait the coming of our rustic friend, and after a kiss and a "good-bye" to her and the servants, and an "all right" to the host, he seized me by the leg and lifted me on the somewhat hard and sharp ridge of the pack-saddle; for, in those days, a soft leather seat on horseback was a luxury reserved for "the quality." He took the horse by the halter—he a pedestrian, an equestrian I—and we went our way—a somewhat weary way—to the skirts of the moor. Those were times in which a cart, waggon, or wheeled vehicle of any sort had never been seen on the roads over which we travelled. The grandest exhibition was the riding *jollifant*, when one farmer's wife sat on a saddle before, and another on a pillion behind her.

Weary indeed was the journey; the first hour nearly exhausted the topics of talk. I had answered every question about *vather*, and *family*, and *schule*, and the visit of the mayor and corporation to the cathedral, and had I seen the judges and the javelin-men, and Jack Cook in his cocked-hat, and Wan't Bill Buzzum hanged *our* sheep stealing? and Did'n I read his last dying speech and confession? and I had been told the price of *taters* in the market, and that the *vuzz* upon the *yeth* had *cort avire*. The second hour, I felt somewhat sore and uncomfortable, and it was suggested I had better "try a bit walk avoot," which I was glad to do, but the road was rough and stony. I looked tired, and was mounted again on the wooden seat. It seemed harder than ever, but I was "too much of a man" to complain, and it was only when the farmer's face was turned away that I compressed my lips and uttered an irrepressible oh!

What a beautiful stream the Teign! How

brightly and gaily it danced with the "*stickles*," and through its crystal glass showed the pebbles below! We stopped at the bridge and looked down upon the trout and the gravelings which were pursuing one another in the transparent current. And then those noble woods which rise above the waters, and the *combes*, rich in green pasturage which runs up to the very foot of the distant hills; and the songs of the birds, sweeter even than the music of the rills,

in the leafy month of June,
Singing their quiet tune!

As we made our way through the wood, through which we then ascended from the side of the river by a rough and narrow road, the banks were covered with bilberry-bushes, among whose green and red-brown leaves hung that pretty little purple fruit, with a *blem* (bloom) softer than that of a plum, known to Devonians by the name of *worts* or wurtleberries. Of these I ate enough to stain my lips, which told the tale of our lingerings, but which helped somewhat to cheer the journey. I fancied withal it would never come to an end; and great was my joy when the farmer said, "We shall soon get to Blackinstone Rock," so I knew that Blackinstone Rock was not far from our destined goal. I have experienced, after a long monotonous voyage, the pleasure of hearing from the topmast, "Land ahead!" but never were those words more acceptable than the three short syllables, "Here we be!"

The farm-house lay at the bottom of a rough half-cultivated basin, set on the very edge of the down. There were two means of access to it—one through a narrow winding lane, whose banks were covered with flowers, eglantines, hazel, brambles, bullace, and briony, intertangled above; while below, sometimes covering the whole way, flowed a clear brook which was never dry except in the hottest of the summer and autumn season, and, even then, lingered in shallow morasses, where the reeds and rushes were almost as verdant as the duck-weeds spread carpet-like upon the surface.

The sisters of my guide and guardian rushed out with eager welcomings. "*Zo glad to zee 'e, and-how be 'e? and how be all at whoame? And now zit down, for you be tired;*" and, scarcely being seated, one of the rosy-checked maidens presented me with a lusty slice of a brown loaf, covered with the matchless produce of the Devonian dairy. It has transferred its colour and its fragrance to the *Rosa Devoniensis*. "Now you know the law. If the crain is not as thick as the bread, 'tis'n good for nort."

The family consisted of six personages—the good old father, the warm-hearted son, a Martha and a Mary, by which I mean, "a loving" and "a serving" daughter; a quiet cat, whose business it seemed to be to keep watch in the house as a sentinel, marching backward and forward, and coming now and then to be rubbed on the back, and to return the attentions to poor pussy with a grateful purr; then a virtuous and intellectual dog, named Shep-

herd, the object of general admiration for his many excellences, natural and acquired. In truth, he was a model of attention and obedience. He knew every sheep in the flock, and would single out and separate any one to which his eye was directed by his owner. When noticed, he would have willingly wagged his tail, but that he had no tail to wag—there was only a stump about an inch long; and I learnt that the shorter the stump, the greater the aptitude of the animal for the special service in which he was engaged. I have seen him hang his head in sorrow and shame when detected in some sin of neglect, insubordination, or other impropriety; and if "Fie, Shepherd!" fell from his master's lips, then would he slowly and reverentially lift his head, look into his master's face, as if inquiring, "What is to be done?" On being restored to favour, he would run about, wild and delighted, in circles round the farmer as he accompanied him to the moor, and announced their advent to the scattered flock.

What a wonderful vitality upon the heath and among the heather! The earwig galloping over the ground, the bee that announces his departure and his arrival from flower to flower, the bird whose flight is swifter than the eye can follow, the clouds that roll along in their serene majesty—all things seem impelled by an unwonted activity; the breezes blow more briskly, the sun is more gloriously bright, the golden gorse whose splendour called from Linné such an outbreak of enthusiasm; the mauve-coloured ericas, which put forth a claim to vie with the green of the forest, or the blue of the sky—each has a territory of its own over which it rules supreme. Every object bears the same impress of independence and freedom. You may see the rabbits far away from their holes, running about on the moor, never dreaming of molestation or interruption. If you meet a rustic, one of the sparse population of those wild regions, he will no more hesitate to address you than he would to speak to his brother, and, perceiving you to be a stranger, will invite you to admire "the pixie rings where they dances," "*pixie stools* where they *zits*," or the pools in the granite rocks where "they washes thersells." He will point out a "gunny," and probably exclaim, "Hurn! hurn! Look at the little tail o' en how he hoppeth;" and if you will but encourage him to talk, you may learn the name of every squire—though there will probably be only one of them, of the *passen* and the *jistis*—and of every "varm" and "varmer" and sheep-dog; and he will laugh and be delighted if you ask him the name of every *purty* girl within a circuit of half a dozen miles. He will tell you where the *divil* played at quoits with the conjuror, and how the *divil's* quoit—as big as an ordinary parish church—stuck upon the top of a Tor, "*dree* miles away," while the conjuror's, though not "haff" so big, *did'n* go haff "*zo vur*," but *drapped* in the "*combe*" below; and he will assure you, *Faiks! fath!* on his honour and honesty, that he don't "*mistry*"

you wi' *dildrams*—deceive you with idle tales—but that you may *zee* the coits with “your own blessed eyes.”

Church and church-going are favourite subjects of talk. In a Devonshire dialogue, written by the sister of Sir Joshua Reynolds, three-fourths of a century ago, the following bit of devout talk occurs:

“I larn’d the nestle draft (weakest child of the family) to read an *zay* es prayers. Wan day a was a kneeling to my knee an *zaying* arter me, ‘Give us this day our daily bread,’ a reamed (stretched out) es neck, way es sweet begging eyes, an *zed* saft in my ear, ‘Maant us ask for a crum of butter upon it?’ I hugg’d en in. ‘My precious lam,’ quoth I, ‘be a good boy, and you wan’t lack butter upon your bread.’ Pretty zoul! a made a rare gammet (strange fun) vor us last neart (night). There was a wholly rally of us to the Pigeons a wan is, come for barm (at the same time for yeast), and his maester was a palavering away about religion as a allers (always) doth when he’s half-a-go. ‘Come yender,’ saith he to Batt; stand vore and pit your hands behind your back, and *zay* the chief end o’ man. Who made tha? Batt naddid his hed and *zed*, ‘God!’ ‘Wot did God make tha vor? Speak, mum-chance! (stupid). Wot did God make tha vor? Wot dist stand digging thee head an stuttering zo for?’ Batt looked up zo harmless and *zed*, ‘To carry dung to Crowbere.’ Good zure, what a hullabaloo they zet up, and *zed* a was a fule. I was ready to blake (burst) way laffing. His maester looked brinded (angrily) upon en. ‘You drumble-drone dunder-headed slinpon (simpleton), ef a had a good smart switch in ma ‘and, I’d twack thee till I made thee twine (wriggle) like an angletwich!’ (snake). A was zo mad as a Scoff (Scotsman?), es lips bevered (trembled) agen.”

But a little more must be said about the *pixies*, for if you want to untie the rustic’s tongue, let him go with you to the *pixie* world, for him the sole region of romance, and of which he has many a tale to recount. But beware of throwing any doubt upon his veracity, or distrusting the authority to which he refers. Your incredulousness or infidelity will soon reduce him to silence, whereas, if you encourage him by showing not only that you are interested in, but that you believe his stories are not *gammet*—mere joke and fauey—and that they are *gospel-true*, he will go on from one “I’ve yeard tell” to another, like Scherazade in the Arabian Nights—how two young lovers, listening to the *pixies* singing and intruding upon their haunts, were *begged* (bewitched) into a quagmire, where they were *stogged* (stuck in the mud) for the whole night, and heard the *pixies* laughing at them and clapping their hands, while at every step they got deeper and deeper into the *mur*. Then the nightmare with which some of them tormented Rab Rabson, who was jealous of Molly, his excellent and virtuous wife, and the mother of a large family, while others pinched him black

and blue. Then how Bett Buzzum revealed one of their secrets, of which she had become possessed; they entered into her house when she was gone to market, bolted it on the inside, broke her spinning-wheel, tossed about the wool, and tore her yarn into shreds, waiting her arrival in the heavy rain, in which she was thoroughly drenched, and when she had roused the blacksmith to force the *hatch*, they saw the *pixies* jump out of the window, and heard them talk of their own fun and the old *homan’s* fury. He can show you the *pixy-seats*—the knots and entanglings on the manes of the horses which have employed their busy fingers when the animals have been turned out to run wild upon the moor, the king of the *pixies*, probably Puck himself, directing their proceedings while seated upon his throne—the *pix-puff*—one of the largest of the British fungi.

There was scarcely a farm-house or cottage slated, or tiled; they were all thatched in those times. The danger from fire was small, standing as they stood, alone, and not being exposed to any danger from the imprudence of careless neighbours. A *datch’d roof* was deemed an essential comfort. “Why, don’t it kip out the vrost in winter and the *zin* in zummer? A can’t look at the slate without *veeling avore* when ‘tis cold, and a *swellering* when ‘tis *het*.” What more picturesque than the cottage white as snow, with the clematis, the honeysuckle, and the roses running up its walls? A roof of thatch re-roofed with green mosses, among which grows the house-leek, whose flowers peep out like birdlets from their nests. Many a village and small town in Devonshire has been wholly destroyed by fire fed by the dry straw which covered the houses, and, when restored, this source of peril has been removed; but the solitary dwellings remain in their pristine beauty, mementoes of the past, and adornings of the present days.

The mode of life was very simple. There was food in superfluity. Mutton and poultry, pork, ham, bacon, and on any great occasion “a roaster,” furnished by the *pigslooze*; for tippie, there was *zyder*—all the produce of the *varm*. The old Devonian meals used to be described as no less than six in a day: “*staybit* and breakfast, *annat* and dinner, *mumpet* and *crumpet*, and a bit arter zupper.” Our morning meal was brown bread steeped in rich warm milk *stroaked* from the cow; for *annat*, rough cider—sweet cider was held to be detestable—a *nug* of *vinny* cheese and barley bread. A *virkin* of cider was always accessible, free as water to the household; *tay* was had between the dinner and supper—the last a substantial repast, but the tea was not the monotonous leaf brought from the flowery land, but there were many varieties, such as *organ* tay, and balm tay, and mint tay, and rosemary tay, bunches of all which were seen hanging to dry in the wide chimney; there were camomile and coltsfoot, the infusion of which was to be drunk “if anything went wrong.” A most popular aliment was mutton broth, in which turnips, and carrots, and cab-

bage were swimming about, and a sprinkling of green *chives* and orange marigold leaves floated on the surface. Need I mention the junket, the pride and glory of Devon? It has been sung by Shakespeare, and Spenser, and Milton, and many other ancient bards, and I may note, by the way, that it was *not* introduced from Italy, and is not the *gioncata* from which etymologists have too hastily pronounced it to be derived, and that the clotted cream peculiar to the west of England, and the south-eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, whence came the Phœnicians to purchase tin in Cornwall and Devon, is a *sine quâ non* in its composition.

The chimney hearth occupied a considerable portion of the kitchen. Movable seats, called *settles*, were arranged on the two sides within the hearth, and sometimes a brick bench formed part of the original construction. Coals were never used, but *yeth turves* and *tan turves* were supplied from the bogs and the tanneries; logs from the *hoods* (woods), and dry *vuzz* from the moors, were always at hand when a cheerful blaze was wanted. Hanging down the *chimly* on an iron crook, was a *crook* with three short legs, the crook being filled with water and lowered down upon the fire when hot water was in demand. A *trivet* was generally at hand, sometimes serving for a stand on which a *cloam* (earthenware) basin was placed. The ashes, which were carefully preserved in order to be *potted* for washing purposes, were kept together on the sides by a pair of *dogirons*, which were in some places adorned with a brass head, while a movable bar of iron—now and then, but not always—served for a *fender* in front. There was generally a competition for the best seat on the *settle*, as there was always a chance of being stifled with smoke or scorched by heat, or left in the cold, but the guest was always placed in the most comfortable position.

Farmers "well to do" lived almost wholly in their kitchens, which were frequently paved with stones and covered with sand. A long table, where the labourers ate their meals with their employers, all sitting on the same benches, the men on one side, the women on the other, and the dame presiding and distributing the food—two or three rude wooden chairs, one with arms for the maester, and sometimes a log of wood for seats, shelves filled with *cloam* plates and basins, a case or cuckoo-clock, flitches of bacon hanging from the *reck*, were among the common kitchen appendages. There was a parlour used on the rare occasions when friends were invited to *tay*, often without a carpet, whose walls were covered with gaudy papers, on which were hung highly-coloured pictures of prize horses, naval fights, lads and lasses courting, scriptural scenes, framed samplers with flowers and texts, seldom exposed to the common gaze. It was a grand event to receive an invitation to an evening party. After tea, there were cards—beggars my neighbour for the young people, loo or cribbage for the adults—a substantial supper, geneva, rum, and brandy, the

rummers filled once and again, some smoking, some singing, and then good night, and *whoam* (home)!

LOVE AND GLORY.

My acquaintance with Mr. Tiddijohn commenced with an abruptness that might have startled a pilgrim less familiar than myself with the ways of this remarkable world.

"You are admiring my wife, sir," said Mr. Tiddijohn, walking suddenly up within six inches of my person. (We were on a voyage from the port of Southampton to that of Cowes, and the sea was—I am not aware if the expression be technical—wobbly.)

"Sir," I replied, "if the lady in the striped Garibaldi be your wife, it is impossible *not* to admire the composure, the grace, with which she adapts herself to the singular motions of—of this—uneasy vessel—Bless me, how she rolls!"

"The sea *is* lively, sir," said Mr. Tiddijohn. "But the spirit of my wife soars superior to the hailments common to humanity, and never—Eh! Yes, my dear. . . . Excuse me, sir. . . . Here—stewardess!"

And he darted away.

"She is better, sir," resumed Mr. Tiddijohn, presently returning.

"I am rejoiced to hear it, sir," said I.

"Glory loses no lustre on these occasions, sir," continued my friend, a punchy little man, with a curious mixture of stateliness and vulgarity.

"Glory, sir, has more to do with heart than stomach," I observed.

"You are right, sir," said Mr. Tiddijohn. "Nevertheless, half a dozen caraway-seeds would have done no harm."

"I beg your pardon?"

"They might have absolved her from this necessity, sir," said Mr. Tiddijohn. "In another, the situation would have been humbling. Glory makes everything attractive."

"Even sea-sickness?" said I, laughing.

"I cannot join in your mirth, sir," replied my queer little companion, drawing up his squat figure to its full height. "When I see such a being stretched, limp, and pale, upon a saltish bench, rejecting the offices of friendship, and—and a good deal more—and with a countenance expressive of the most profound indifference as to the eventualities of the voyage—I ask myself, *can this be Glory?*"

"Glory?"

"Glory, sir. *My* Glory. My wife's name is Gloriana. Our family name is Tiddijohn."

I bowed.

"I have the honour, sir," resumed my friend, "to be the husband of that lady, on whom I noticed that you were bestowing very marked attention. I feel it—I always do—as a compliment to myself. I accept your homage in the best spirit. I took the liberty of addressing

you, contrary to the customs of the circle in which we move, for the purpose of inviting you to express, in the frankest and most unreserved manner, your opinion of my wife."

I glanced at Mrs. Tiddijohn. It was an unlucky moment. She was rising on her elbow, while an attendant sylph, or naiad . . . It is no matter, for I was already in a position to confess, with all sincerity, that the wife of my curious little friend was unquestionably a very beautiful woman. It is easy to understand, further, that the beauty that can vindicate itself under such adverse conditions must be of no mean order.

"Gloriana!" I thought. "Come, she is worthier of the name than that swearing, boxing, iron-hearted masculine flirt upon whom Sidney's poet-soul bestowed it."

She had resumed her recumbent position, and I could see the colour timidly revisiting her smooth fair cheek, as if it were not quite certain of its tenure. Her large liquid dark-blue eyes were fixed upon the hurrying clouds, and she seemed indifferent even to the fact that an object resembling a golden thirty-two-pound shot, called, I am told, a "chignon," and carried at the back of the head, had burst its cerements, and hung, a glittering wave, across the arm of the bench on which she reclined.

Mr. Tiddijohn was watching me with an expression of profound content.

"You are enchanted, sir," he said, at last.

"The spell is powerful, I must own. But, excuse me, does not the lady at this instant need—"

"I dursn't—that is, I cannot approach her," said Mr. Tiddijohn. "I have this moment received a warning glance—familiar to me—and which I interpret thus: 'Keep your distance; you have been smoking.' On atondong, as we have yet half an hour to Cowes, I will, with your permission, relate to you one of the most remarkable stories you ever heard, and afterwards present you to its heroine."

"I embrace both offers, sir," I replied, "and this cigarette, whose flavour will not survive its extinction above a minute, will not, I trust, prevent my being admitted to the honour you propose. Pray begin."

Mr. Tiddijohn placed himself in a comfortable position, commanding a good view of his wife, and, in well-chosen language, excepting when, for a moment or two, he became excited by the theme, favoured me with the following narrative.

"Born, sir," commenced Mr. Tiddijohn, "in Quantock-street, Simmery-axe, transferred at an early age, about ten months, to the ancient feudal residence of the Dooks of Brandon in Hampshire, I passed my sunny childhood among the streams and woodlands of that beautiful domain."

"You are connected with the family?" I asked.

"I am, sir," replied Mr. Tiddijohn, calmly;

"my mother was wife of the duke's under butler. She subsequently became housekeeper. His grace, as all the world is aware, resided principally in a modest lodging in Paris, and my mother's chief duties, for many years, consisted in admitting little groups of people (who thought they were taking pleasure) at one end of the picture-corridors for sixpence apiece, and dismissing them peremptorily at the other, for a shilling.

"My excellent mother found this occupation so profitable, that she conceived the idea of bringing me up to the same, and I had already mastered the pictorial history of the noble Brandons, down to the ninth century, when—you'll hardly believe your hears, sir" (Mr. Tiddijohn was becoming excited), "a horde come for to sell the 'ole lot of 'em down to the Lady Halithea, who died unmarried, of 'oooping-cough, haged nine. Hafter this sackerreligious act, nothing prospered. A wing of the mansion was burned down, tenants bolted, hagents come to grief, the dook died, and my mother gave warning, which was took.

"She had saved a good lump of money, sir—so, at least, I thought it *then*," continued Mr. Tiddijohn, "nigh five hundred pound. My father proposed to take charge of this sum, to add to it the whole of his savings (which proved to be nine-pound-seven), take the whole to America, and invest it in the purchase of land. My mother and I were to return, for the present, to Simmery-axe, and jine him—my guv'nor, that is—at a future period.

"He promised to write, and kep' his word; but he took ten years to do it, and then he only mentioned that he would write again. I was, by this time, about twenty, and thought I should like to do something for a living, seeing it wasn't very probable that my guv'nor, and the five hundred pound odd, had come to any good. My mother asked me what I should like best to be. I made answer, 'A traveller.' You see, I had read a many books of travel, Sindbad, Peter Wilkins, Robinson Crusoe, ansetterer, and had a great wish to visit foreign lands. We had a relation in the dry goods line at Liverpool, and when my mother wrote, telling him my wishes, and asking his advice, he, Mr. Normicutt, replied, 'All right. Send him to me.'

"Well, sir, I took an affecting leave of my mother, promising to return in five year at the outside, and to send her, in the mean time, little tokens of my safety and remembrance—a diamond, some purses of sequins, a hundred monkeys, or so—and off I started in high spirits for Liverpool.

"The event did not justify my expectations. Five minutes' conversation with Mr. Normicutt revealed the fact that my journeyings were to be solely in the interests of the Messrs. Sprounce and Alkali, manufacturers of fancy soaps, and to be limited, for the present, to the three northern counties of my native land.

"Sir, it was a disappointment. But I resigned

myself, like a man, to the course destiny had prepared, and for three years did my very best to propagate the illusion that Messrs. Sprounce and Alkali's soaps were better than anybody else's, notwithstanding that that spirited firm were content to supply them at one-third the usual cost. Such extraordinary success attended my representations, that I was at length taken into partnership, and was doing very fairly, when my mother received a second communication from America.

"It was written by a lawyer in Memphis, and informed us that my father was dead. He died, sir, from over-excitement, occasioned by an extraordinary stroke of good fortune. He had, it seemed, invested his money in the purchase of a piece of land, near which a town of considerable size was intended to be built. The site proved unhealthy. The town went elsewhere, and my father's property sank to zero. Unwilling to report this result to us, he had managed to support himself in various ways, until some remarkable discoveries in the land immediately adjoining his own, induced him to attempt similar researches. The result may be told in three short words. But, sir, they are significant. *He struck oil.* When informed by the agent that he was realising one thousand pounds a day, he fainted, and when, after a short but severe illness, he awoke to the consciousness that one hundred and twenty thousand pounds had been offered for the produce of his land, he merely ejackerlated, 'Take it,' and expired."

Mr. Tiddijohn was silent for a moment; then, after a glance at his wife, resumed:

"I was a rich man now, sir, but I cannot say that I was a happier one. I could now travel, if I liked, in reality, and I did. I embarked on the salt seas, and sailed, sir, for Bullone. The voyage occupied two hours and a half. Were there any overland route to England, I should certainly prefer it. After some time, I endeavoured to induce my mother to jine me; but she wrote that she was wedded to Simmery-axe, and also to the curate of a chapel there, who had about nineteen children, and wanted a motherly woman to take the place of his deceased partner.

"Left alone in the world, I returned to England, and took a handsome lodging at the West-end. What shall I do next? I asked.

"'Marry,' said my mother, who was nursing her fourteenth step-child, 'and surround yourself with such cherubs as these.' (Her eldest 'cherub' was six-and-twenty.)

"I had no objection to marry; and, indeed, had a secret suspicion that that was what I wanted. 'Man, the 'ermit,' you are aware, sir, pined, till woman smiled. But it was not so easy to find my mate. Whether a childhood passed among the noble Brandons had elevated my taste, or whether I had gleaned a little bit of romance from my books, I cannot say, but I felt that not one of the young ladies I had

hitherto known could fill the aching void in this buzzom. Coarse, sir, coarse. Sometimes showy, but coarse in grain.

"My great amusement was to stroll in the Park with my friend Jack Prosser (for, though I was a swell now, I did not cut my old mates of the commercial-room), and speculate upon which of the beautiful delicate young creatures that flew past us, sitting, lightly as snow-flakes, upon their graceful steeds, and rosy with exercise and mirth, should be my choice, provided I could get her! But these were all dreams. I had, at that time, sir, no position in society, except that of lolling over the rails in company with the Earl of Grifflinhoof, or my Lord Viscount Fizzig, whom I didn't know.

"It was of little use that Prosser reminded me of my wealth.

"'There's you,' said my friend, kindly, 'with your five thousand a year, that could buy up half the nobs and swells (if their debts was paid) that's prancing about here; and you're in the dumps because you can't catch a countess at once!'

"'I don't particularly want a countess,' says I, 'for that wouldn't make me a count; and I shouldn't like to have to call my wife my lady. All I ask, Prosser, is a lovely, sweet, angelic—Hush—look here!'

"There passed us, at this moment, a gentleman and lady on horseback. The gentleman had large grizzled moustaches, and a proud fierce look, though, at the time they came by, he was laughing at something his companion had said. The lady was nearest to us—so near, that I could have touched the amethyst top of her delicate riding-whip. She turned her face full towards me for a second; but that was enough. The next thing I was conscious of was a pull at my sleeve. Prosser was hailing me as if I had been five hundred yards off.

"'I say! Hoy! Tiddijohn! What's the matter now? Halloo!'

"I rubbed my eyes, as if waking.

"'Jack,' I gasped, 'did you see *that*? Was it human?'

"'Human! What d'ye mean?' said Jack.

"'I say, old fellow, collect yourself; they're a starin' at us.'

"'I am collected—all of a heap,' I said, faintly attempting a joke. 'But, Jack—that girl—she shot me!'

"'Shot you?' ejaculated Prosser.

"'I felt it pass through me,' I replied (and so I had)—'in at my eyes, through my heart, out at my toes.'

"'It's well it's gone,' said Jack, gruffly.

"'But I feel it still. Jack, if that's love, I'm taken sudden, and fatally.'

"'I hope not,' says Jack. 'That would be a bad job, *that* would, for you've no chance *there*.'

"'Eh? What? You know her?'

"'Very well,' said Jack. 'Our people supplies her with lace. She has just chosen a—'

"'Her name?'"

"'Caliver. She's the only daughter and heiress of General Sir Sampson Caliver—that proud old military swell she was riding with. He's a very unpleasant card, I can tell you, and precious short with everybody but her. They're in tip-top society, and he wants her to marry a dook.'"

"'What dook?' said I, bewildered. 'I'll tear her from that dook's arms! I'll——'"

"'Don't be an ass,' said Prosser, kindly. 'It's no use, dear old boy. Why, she was a quizzing you as she passed! It's that weskit and cravat. I've often 'inted that you dress too loud.'"

"'Quizzing! . . . Loud! . . . Prosser!' I gasped, 'you don't understand. Lady—princess—queen—whatever she may be, I love her all the same. I can't help her station. If she was a barefooted beggar, I'd marry her, and she should ride in a chariot of gold. As it is, I shall love her, secret, for the rest of my life, and leave my fortune to the dook's second son. For legal purposes, I desire to know her christian name.' I took out my note-book.

"'Gloriana,' said Jack.

"'Glori——' (my trembling fingers almost refused to write her beautiful name). 'Prosser,' I continued, 'I want to be alone. Good-bye, old boy, for the present. We meet to-night, as usual—half-past nine—Harmonic Hedgehogs.' And we parted.

"I walked across the Park. It has been said that, in moments of great excitement, fancy plays us all manner of tricks, and I wasn't at all surprised to see, in fiery characters six foot high, written on the air, 'Approaching Marriage in 'Igh Life.—We rejoice to learn that a marriage has been arranged between the lovely and accomplished daughter of General Sir Sampson Caliver, G.C.H., K.C.B., and his Grace the Dook of Ampassy-Etcetera.' Well, may they be blest! O Gloriana! beautiful phantom! I have seen you, loved you. From this hour forth you sit, though you don't know it, enshrined in my heart of hearts. No vile unworthy thought shall ever approach your throne—no selfish hope, no vain desire. Thus only can I be worthy to cherish your sweet image, to worship you, my fairy queen—my goddess-bride—my——"

"'Hi! hi! there! *Uah!*' rang in my ears; and the next moment I was flying, head over heels, I knew not whither! I suppose I was unconscious for a moment, for, on recovering, I found myself on the ground, in the ride, with my head on somebody's knee, the centre of a large circle of people, on foot and horseback. A sort of altercation seemed to be going on.

"'Atrocious carelessness!' 'But he was repeatedly called to.' 'Culpable disregard of human life!' 'Galloping swell—little *he* cares,' &c.

"'The gentleman has tendered his card and address, and desired that this person be looked to,' said one of the horsemen, quietly.

"'Yes, five shillin's for a cab, and take away the dead 'un,' growled a bystander. 'Take t'other into custody, I say. If 't had been one of *us*, he'd ha' been in the station-'ouse by now.'

"'You had better ride on with your daughter, Sir Sampson,' said the quiet voice, 'and let *me* look to this.'

"I raised myself with some difficulty. Sir Sampson, calm and haughty, and Gloriana, pale and frightened, stood before me in the midst of the excited mob. I cast one glance upon her.

"'Hear me,' I said. '*Will* you be silent, and hear me? The fault was *mine*—solely mine. This gentleman was in no way to blame. I want neither his card nor his assistance.'

"'I should think not!' bawled the voice of Jack Prosser, who, attracted by the hubbub, had run back to see what was 'up.' 'Assistance? nothing of the sort! My friend has ten thousand a year!' shouted Jack, in a voice that might have been heard at Charing-cross.

"'Hush! hush! Jack, and get me away,' I said, faintly; and, with one more glance at Gloriana, relapsed into insensibility.

"I had received a severe blow on the head, and was much shaken besides. The doctor feared concussion of the brain, and kept me very quiet and low; but I was better on the fourth day, and was then informed that a servant had called every day with inquiries, and, on the last occasion, had left a note. I glanced at the monogram on the seal, and tore it open:

"107, Hyde Park-square.

"'Dear Sir. It is with sincere pleasure that I learn that you have sustained no serious injury from the accident, occasioned (I must frankly confess) by *my* carelessness, but which, with most gentlemanlike feeling, you attributed to your own. My daughter unites with me both in condolence and congratulation. Trusting that an acquaintance so inauspiciously begun may ripen into an intercourse of a far more agreeable character, I remain, dear sir, your faithful servant,

"'SAMPSON CALIVER.'

"Whoever taught Sir Sampson the delicate Italian hand in which this note was written, would have been highly pleased to notice how well the gallant general had retained, through all the haste and scramble of military life, the light, firm touch of youth! He would have remarked, further, that Sir Sampson preferred a crow-quill, and scented his pink despatches with the fragrance of the jessamine. My heart told me *who* had written that note, and who had not objected to write that she wished our acquaintance might improve.

"It did improve, sir. Before I had left my room, Sir Sampson called on me in person, and sat for nearly ten minutes, talking very agreeably. He seemed much struck with the luxury and elegance of my apartments, and observed

that it needed nothing but a few Rembrances and Leonardodavinchys, to make it perfect. As I didn't know for certain what he meant, and thought it might be some new kind of bath, or boot-jack, I assented, and said I would get half a dozen or so the first time I could stroll out towards Soho. Sir Sampson smiled, and nearly knocked me down a second time, by pressing me to come to lunch on a certain day, when his daughter would be ('From home,' I thought) delighted to show me some pictures, which might guide my choice.

"We are approaching Cowes. I shall not, therefore, attempt to describe the tumult of emotion in which I passed the intervening time. I was, however, sufficiently collected to reform my wardrobe. My costume on the eventful day was quietness itself, being, according to the fastidious Jack, compounded of the undertaker and the parish clerk.

"All that morning passed in a species of dream. I knew that I was presented to Gloriana—that I sat and talked with her and her father—goodness only knows what I said—and that, after a trying progress through the picture-gallery, in which the rich music of Gloriana's voice kept me entirely unconscious of the meaning of her observations, we sat down to a sumptuous lunch. A fourth cover had been laid. I supposed it was for the dook. But we didn't wait for him, and he didn't come.

"All this time, sir, though I was at the very 'eight of 'appiness, I felt that I was a fool. She could never be more or less to *me*—poor half educated fancy-soap man—than an object of distant adoration, and, when my idol was withdrawn, where should I be? I put on a strong resolution, and, filling a bumper of port, I drank *her* health and Sir Sampson's, and then said I must go.

"But, my dear Mr.—Mr. Tiddijohn,' said the general, 'this must not be your last visit. We are not so easily satisfied. You must dine with us, say to-morrow, if your numerous engagements permit. You have not yet heard my daughter's voice, you know.'

"I looked at her so quickly, that I caught her knitting her beautiful brow at her father, as if she didn't quite endorse his invitation. So I began stammering an excuse. But Sir Sampson would not listen. He put my numerous engagements aside in no time, and I found myself, on the following day, handing Gloriana in to dinner. The same mysterious cover was laid for a fourth party, but nobody came. The dook, I thought, takes it very coolly!

"Miss Caliver was gentle and patronising—sometimes, I thought, just a trifle sarcastic—but what could I expect? If you come to that, what business had I there at all?

"After she had left us, there was a pause. I was afraid Sir Sampson was about to return to the subject of the Rembrances and Something-vinchys, which I had discovered were pictures, but, instead of that, he suddenly inquired:

"Pray, Mr. Tiddijohn, do you pay frequent visits to your American estates?"

"I replied that I had not an acre of land of my own, but that I had considerable sums invested in the United States securities, which returned a large income.

"I have always been of opinion,' resumed my host, 'that a moderate income—say ten thousand a year—is the most enjoyable and the least embarrassing fortune that an English gentleman can possess.'

"I remarked that I should be perfectly willing at any time to risk the embarrassments attendant upon such a state of things, but hardly expected that the opportunity would present itself.

"The general slightly raised his eyebrows.

"I—excuse me, sir,' he said, 'I do not wish to be indiscreet, but I certainly heard—from whom was it, some friend of yours, Lord Fizgig?—that you were precisely in the enviable situation I have mentioned?'

"I replied, frankly, that the partiality of Lord Fizgig, whom I knew very well (by sight), had perhaps exaggerated my possessions. I had six thousand a year, my mother having contented herself with *one*, which would ultimately revert to me.

"Sir Sampson looked a little grave, but seemed gratified by this candid statement, and shook hands with me across the corner of the table.

"You will excuse, my young friend,' he said, kindly, 'the interest I—and I think I must say my daughter also—feel in the prosperity of one who has given such proofs of a high and noble nature. And permit me, while on this subject, to express my astonishment that Mr. Tiddijohn has not hitherto formed some matrimonial alliance befitting his wealth and station.'

"Mr. Tiddijohn's heart gave a slight bound. Does he, *can* he, recognise the possibility of my contending for such a prize as he speaks of—as, for instance, his own peerless child?

"I hesitated, and mumbled something in my frank way about uneducated tastes, humble desires, &c.

"Come, come, my good friend, that won't do, you know,' said the general, good humouredly; 'nobility has claims; so has wealth. Maury a titled damsel (did she know your personal worth as well as we) would willingly exchange her ancient name for that of Tiddijohn! But perhaps you do not care for titles and ancient lineage?'

"I honestly avowed that I cared for neither. To possess the object of one's idola—that is to say, preference—was, in my opinion, the climax of human felicity.

"And such an idolatrous preference you have formed, eh, Tiddijohn?' said the general, with a smile. 'Ah! you hesitate. You colour. How is this? Come, I am an old man of the world; you are a young one. We are not

upon even terms, unless I am as candid as yourself. Tiddijohn, *you love my daughter.*

"I started from my chair.

"General!—Sir Sampson!—your daughter?

—So wild—so presumptuous a hope—

"'Would be perfectly natural,' interrupted the general, coolly. 'Sit down, my boy. The claret is with you.'

"I sat down, as if in a dream.

"'But, sir—I—I thought—the dook——'

"'The dook be hanged,' said the general. 'Never shall he marry child of mine. If there be one quality in the youthful character more revolting than another, it is parsimony. Give me waste, give me extravagance, but spare me avarice! Tiddijohn, I will let you into a family secret. It will, of course, go no further. Yourself, the dook, Gloriana, and I—*we four*—alone possess that secret. The necessity of surrounding my beloved child with all the luxuries her station, her beauty, her grace and accomplishments imperatively demand, has involved me in considerable pecuniary difficulty. As a condition of her marriage with the dook, I was compelled to stipulate that a certain sum—a trifle to him, but of some importance to a mere old soldier like *me*—fifteen thousand pounds, should be devoted to the payment of debts, chiefly (bear in mind) incurred for his future wife. His grace refused. The match was thereupon formally broken off; but, to satisfy my child that I had done all that an affectionate parent could, I informed his grace that a cover would be laid for him as usual at my table for a certain period, and that his appearance within that time might intimate acceptance of my terms. This very day the limit has expired. Gloriana is free. Do you understand me? *Free!*'

"For the moment, I hardly did understand him. As my thoughts disentangled themselves, I began to discover that the freedom of Gloriana was a first step in the direction of my desires. The second appeared to be a cheque on my bankers for fifteen thousand pounds. That might be managed. What was it in comparison with *her*? The next step presented the real difficulty. How was she to be won? With other cheques? Hout on the thought!

"'I have said enough,' resumed Sir Sampson, 'to show you, Tiddijohn, that, supposing my conjecture to be correct, you will have no opposition to fear from *me*, provided my little stipulation be met in a corresponding spirit of candour and liberality. To own the truth, I fear you may encounter a more serious obstacle in the young lady. The dook had some fascinating qualities, and—But courage. Try your luck. You have my best wishes, and always my good word. But for twenty times the little advantage I shall reap by it, I would not force the inclinations of my child.'

"I could not wish those words unsaid. And yet they sounded like the death-warrant of my hopes. 'Try my luck!' *I?* With a woman who had refused more offers (so Prosser had assured

me) than she was years old! I had almost made up my mind to own that I had not courage enough for such an attempt, when the general observed:

"'I comprehend your modest doubts, my good friend; but, I think I see a way' He paused a moment. 'Yes—it might answer. Would you mind my kicking you downstairs?'

"'Sir!' I exclaimed, thinking he was mad.

"'Or pitching you out of the window? It's quite low.'

"'I don't understand you, Sir Sampson.'

"'At all events, you will allow me to make use of any terms I please? Come, you won't mind *that*,' said the general, cheerfully. '*This* is our plan, you see. Gloriana has in her character a strong spice of romance. If she found that, owing to your addresses being unacceptable to *me*, I treated you with unmerited harshness, all the feelings of her generous nature would be at once enlisted in your favour. The more I raged and stormed, the more she would soothe and appeal. An interest once excited in her, who can say to what it might not grow? Eh, what say you?'

"Bewildered with the suddenness of the proposal, dazzled with the hope of winning, by any means, that exquisite treasure, I somehow consented, before I well knew what I was doing.

"'Strike while the iron's hot,' I remember Sir Sampson saying. 'But, first, one more glass to our success.' And he poured out two glasses of something that tasted to me like liquid fire. It gave me courage, however, and, at the general's suggestion, I marched into the drawing-room alone, determined to stake my fate upon a single throw. Gloriana was sitting at a small table at the far end of the superb room, the light of a reading-lamp falling upon her queen-like face, and glistening on the golden spikes of the wreath she wore.

"I remember making three or four strides towards her, and then falling, in a sort of lump, on the floor. I remember uttering a wild rhapsody of prayers, vows, and protestations. I remember Miss Caliver rising, with an expression of unfeigned alarm, and making for the bell. That, being embarrassed by my prostrate body, she paused, and that I took advantage of that fortuitous circumstance to grasp the skirt of her train, and renew my vows. That, thereupon, she screamed aloud. That the general burst into the room, and, without hesitation, collared me on the spot, branding me as 'drunken clown,' 'insolent beggar,' &c., and upbraiding me with this base return for the kindness and hospitality I had received.

"'You—*you*—a bag fellow—a dealer in soap-suds—presume to love my daughter? Out of my house, miscreant, or—'

"'Patience, papa—*dear* papa!' said my beautiful mistress, interposing. 'He meant no harm. Oh, let him go! See how pale

he looks! And he only frightened me a very little!"

"How!" roared the foaming general. "You plead for him? Minion! You—you care for him?"

"No, no!" exclaimed my beloved. "I hate him!"

"Then here goes!" shouted the general. And he threw up the window. Gloriana shrieked, and cast herself between us.

"Papa, papa, this is cruel and wicked! You shall not harm this gentleman—if he be one. I will protect him with my life!"

"So, so," began Sir Sampson. But by this time I had regained my scattered senses. I rose.

"Stop, if you please," I said, with a voice so calm that it really sounded, to myself, as if somebody else was speaking. "Let me put an end to this. Madam, I trust you will pardon a gentleman—if *he be one*—for having for an instant, in his humble but honest adoration, forgotten the reserve due to your feelings and his own. Sir Sampson, will you favour me with a moment's conversation elsewhere?"

"I bowed to Gloriana, and the general, looking rather disturbed, led the way to his study.

"Well, my dear fellow," he began, as soon as the door was closed, "what's the matter? All was going smoothly enough. You noticed how she came round?"

"I noticed one thing, sir, which seems to have escaped *you*," I answered. "Miss Caliver announced that she hated me—'hate' was the word. I love her; and not a whit the less for her honest declaration; but I no longer seek her hand. For her sake, I shall go unmarried to the grave. Sir Sampson, I owe you something for your intended good offices. It was my declared purpose to bequeath my whole fortune to the second son of your daughter's marriage with the dook. If I apportion fifteen thousand of that fortune to meet the pressing needs of her father, I shall but be anticipating, by so much, the benefit I intended for her and hers. Accept it freely, and if it smoothe the way to a renewal of the ducal match, I—I shall endeavour—to—to rejoice!"

"The general caught my hand. He was much agitated, and I saw that a powerful struggle was in progress between his better feelings and his need.

"You are a generous fellow, Tiddijohn," he said, at length, "and I regret . . . Well, well, my good friend, I accept your noble offer." And the poor general hung his head as the last words died on his lips.

"Well, sir, you may suppose that this exciting

scene told severely on my spirits. Foreign travel was recommended, and I returned to Bullone, determined—not to forget Gloriana: *that* was impossible—but to think of her as little as I could, and never to look at an English paper if I could help it, especially that part of it which expresses the editor's pleasure at the impending marriage of two exalted personages he never saw in his life, and who don't care twopence about him.

"Six months had passed, when, as I was one day walking on the quay, there landed, from the Folkestone steamer, a party that attracted my attention. It consisted of two ladies in deep mourning, a distinguished-looking gent, with uncommon fine beard and moustaches (who seemed very attentive to the younger lady, and carried her shawls and little bag), and a maid-servant. As they passed me, the young lady's veil blew aside. GLORIANA!

"I staggered back out of the way, but our eyes had met. She stopped short with an expression of joy, and stepped hastily towards me, holding out both her little hands.

"Dear Mr. Tiddijohn, this is, indeed, fortunate! Aunt, let me present you to this kind friend of—of my poor—" She burst into tears.

"Her aunt came to the rescue, and in a few moments I was made aware that the general had died suddenly a short time since, leaving among his papers a memorandum recording his transaction with me; his earnest gratitude for what he termed my generosity; and his deep regret that all his subsequent endeavours to trace me out had failed.

"You will come and see us, dear good friend," said Gloriana, smiling through her tears. "Here is our address in Paris. Come *soon*."

"If—if the dook has no objection," I stammered, glancing at the male member of the party, who had been a silent, and, as I thought, a stern and gloomy witness of the scene.

"The dook!" exclaimed Gloriana.

"This gentleman—"

"Hush, dear Mr. Tiddijohn. That is our German courier, Adolf Krauss!"

"Ho," said I. "Then I *will* come to Paris."

"And so I did. And here is Cowes, but there is time, sir, to present you to my wife. My love, my . . . Glory, let me introduce to you my friend, Mr. — Humph! our fellow-traveller."

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

CHAPTER VII. AMONG THE BEECHES.

A FINE avenue of beech-trees led from the gate through which George Dallas had passed, to the house which had attracted his admiration. These grandest and most beautiful of trees were not, however, the distinguishing feature of the place: not its chief pride. "The Sycamores" was so called in honour of a profusion of trees of that kind, said in the neighbourhood to have no rivals in all England. Be that as it might, the woodland scenery in Sir Thomas Boldero's noble park was beautiful in the highest degree, and of such beauty George Dallas was keenly and artistically appreciative. The tender loveliness of the spring was abroad throughout the land; its voices, its gladness, its perfumes, were around him everywhere, and as the young man strolled on under the shadow of the great branches, bearing their tender burden of bright, soft, green, half-unclosed buds, the weight and blackness of care seemed to be lifted off him, and his heart opened to fresh, pure, simple aspirations, long strangers to his jaded but not wholly vitiated character. He was very young, and the blessed influence of youth told upon him, its power of receiving impressions, its faculty of enjoyment, its susceptibility to external things—a blessing or a curse as it is used—its buoyancy, its hopefulness. As George Dallas turned from the broad smooth carriage-way, and went wandering over the green elastic turf of the carefully kept park, winding in and out through the boles of the grand old trees, treading now on a tender twig, again on a wild flower, now startling from her nest a brooding lark, anon stopping to listen to a burst of melody from some songster free from domestic cares, he was hardly recognisable as the man who had sat listening to Philip Deane's hard worldly talk at the Strand tavern the day before.

"Brighter and softer" his mother had said he was looking, and it was true. Brighter and softer still the hard, pleasure-wearied, joyless face became, as the minutes stole over him, among the sycamores and beeches. He had pursued his desultory path a mile or more, and had lost sight of the house and the avenue,

when he came to a beautiful open glade, carpeted with turf of the softest green, and over-arched by forest trees. Looking down its long vista, he saw that it terminated with a brilliant flower-garden, and a portion of a noble stone terrace, lying beneath one side of the many-turreted house. He stood entranced by the beauty of the scene, and, after a few moments, felt in his pocket for pencil and paper, in order to sketch it. He found both, and looking round him, saw a piece of the trunk of a felled tree, not yet removed by the care of the forester.

"A capital place to sketch from," thought George, as he folded his coat, and laid it upon the convenient block, and immediately became absorbed in his occupation. He was proceeding rapidly with his sketch, and feeling rather disposed to get it finished as quickly as he could, in order that he might return to the inn and procure some food, of which he stood in considerable need, when he caught the sound of galloping upon the turf in the distance behind him. He raised his head and listened; there it was, the dull, rapid thud of hoofs upon the grass. Was there one rider, or were there more? He listened again—only one, he thought; and now the rapid noise ceased, and was succeeded by the slow, pattering sound of a horse ridden daintily and gently about and about, guided by a capricious fancy. Still George listened, and presently there came riding out of the shadowy distance into the full expanse of the glade, down which the declining sun sent golden rays, as if in salutation, a lady, who was, as his first glance showed him, young and beautiful. She was quite unconscious of his presence, for the piece of timber on which he had been sitting was out of the line of sight, and though he had risen, he was still standing beside it. She came towards him, her slight form swaying to the movements of her bright bay thorough-bred, as she put the animal through all sorts of fanciful paces, now checking him with the rein, now encouraging him with her clear sweet young voice, and patting his arched neck with her white-gloved hand. The young man looked out from his hiding-place, enraptured, as she came on, a vision of youth, beauty, and refinement, down the wide green glade, the sun shining on her, the birds singing, the flowers blooming for her, the proud walls of the old house rising grandly in the background, as if in boast of the worthy shelter

that awaited her. Nearer and nearer she came, and now George Dallas could see her face distinctly, and could hear the pretty words with which she coaxed her horse. It was a face to remember; a face to be the happier for having seen; a face whose beauty was blended of form and colour, of soul, feature, and expression; a face which had all that the earth has to give of its best and fairest, touched with the glory which is higher and better, which earth has not to bestow. It was the face of a girl of nineteen, whose clear eyes were of golden brown, whose cheeks bloomed with the purest, most varying flower-like colour, whose rich golden hair shone in the sunlight, as its braids rippled and turned about with the movement of her head, tossed childishly to the rhythmical measure of her horse's tread.

Half a dozen trees only intervened between her and the spot where George Dallas stood, greedily watching her every movement and glance, when she took her hat off, and pushed the heavy golden hair off her broad white forehead. At that moment, her horse jerked the rein she held loosely, and pulled her slightly forward, the hat falling from her hand on the grass.

"Now see what you have done," she said, with a gay laugh, as the animal stood still and looked foolish. "I declare I'll make you pick it up with your mouth. There, sir, turn, I tell you; come, you know how." And she put the horse through all the pretty tricks of stooping and half kneeling, in which she evidently felt much more pleasure than he did. But she did not succeed: he obeyed touch and word readily; but he did not pick up the hat. At last she desisted, and said with a funny look of mock patience:

"Very well, Sir Lancelot, if you won't you won't, so I must get off." She had just gathered her skirt in her hand, and was about to spring from her saddle, when George Dallas stepped out from among the trees, picked up the hat, and handed it to her, with a bow.

The young lady looked at him in astonishment, but she thanked him with self-possession, which he was far from sharing, and put her hat on, while Sir Lancelot pawed impatiently.

"Thank you," she said; "I did not see any one near."

"I was sitting yonder," said George Dallas, pointing to the spot whence he had emerged, "on some fallen timber, and was just taking the liberty of sketching the view of the house, when you rode up."

She coloured, looked pleased and interested, and said, hesitatingly, having bidden Sir Lancelot "stand."

"You are an artist, sir?"

"No," he answered, "at least, only in a very small way; but this is such a beautiful place, I was tempted to make a little sketch. But I fear I am intruding; perhaps strangers are not admitted."

"Oh yes they are," she replied, hurriedly. "We have not many strangers in this neigh-

bourhood; but they are all welcome to come into the park, if they like. Had you finished your sketch?" she asked, timidly, with a look towards the sheet of paper, which had fallen when Dallas rose, and had been fluttered into sight by the gentle wind. George saw the look, and caught eagerly at any pretext for prolonging the interview a few moments.

"May I venture to show you my poor attempt?" he asked, and without awaiting her answer, he stepped quickly back to the place he had left. The girl walked her horse gently forward, and as he stooped for the paper, she was beside him, and, lifting his head, he caught for a moment the full placid gaze of her limpid eyes. He reddened under the look, full of gentleness and interest as it was, and a pang shot through his heart, with the swift thought, that once he might have met such a woman as this on equal terms, and might have striven with the highest and the proudest for her favour. That was all over now; but at least he, even he, might sun himself in the brief light of her presence. She laid the rein on Sir Lancelot's neck, and took the little drawing from his hand with a timid expression of thanks.

"I am no judge," she said, when she had looked at it, and he had looked at her, his whole soul in his eyes; "but I think it is very nicely done. Would you not like to finish it? Or perhaps there are some other points of view you would like to take? I am sure my uncle, Sir Thomas Boldero, would be delighted to give you every facility. He is very fond of art, and—and takes a great interest in artists."

"You are very kind," said Dallas. "I shall be at Amherst a day or two longer, and I will take the liberty of making a few sketches—that splendid group of sycamores, for instance."

"Ah, yes," she said, laughing, "I call them the godfathers and godmothers of the park. They would make a pretty picture. I tried to draw them once, myself, but *you* cannot imagine what a mess I made of it."

"Indeed," said Dallas, with a smile, "and why am I to be supposed unable to imagine a failure?"

"Because you are an artist," she said, with charming archness and simplicity, "and, of course, do everything well."

This simple exhibition of faith in artists amused Dallas, to whom this girl was a sort of revelation of the possibilities of beauty, innocence, and naïveté.

"Of course," he replied, gravely; "nevertheless I fear I shall not do justice to the sycamores."

And now came an inevitable pause, and he expected she would dismiss him and ride away, but she did not. It was not that she had any of the awkward want of manner which makes it difficult to terminate a chance interview, for she was perfectly graceful and self-possessed, and her manner was as far removed from clumsiness as from boldness. The girl was thinking,

during the pause whose termination Dallas dreaded. After a little, she said:

"There is a very fine picture-gallery at the Sycamores, and I am sure it would give my uncle great pleasure to show it to you. Whenever any gentlemen from London are staying at Amherst, or passing through, Mr. Page at the inn tells them about the picture-gallery, and they come to see it, if they care about such things; perhaps it was he who told you?"

"No," said Dallas, "I am not indebted for the pleasure—for the happiness—of this day to Mr. Page. No one guided me here, but I happened to pass the gate, and a very civil old gentleman, who was doing some gardening at the lodge, asked me in." His looks said more than his words dared to express, of the feelings with which his chance visit had inspired him. But the girl did not see his looks; she was idly playing with Sir Lancelot's mane, and thinking.

"Well," she said, at last, settling herself in the saddle, in a way unmistakably preliminary to departure, "if you would like to see the picture-gallery, and will walk round that way, through those trees, to the front of the house"—she pointed out the direction with the handle of her riding-whip—"I will go on before, and tell my uncle he is about to have a visitor to inspect his treasures."

"You are very kind," said Dallas, earnestly, "and you offer me a very great pleasure. But Sir Thomas Boldero may be engaged—may think it an intrusion."

"And a thousand other English reasons for not accepting at once a civility frankly offered," said the girl, with a delightful laugh. "I assure you, I could not gratify my uncle more than by picking up a stray connoisseur; or my aunt than by bringing to her a gentleman of sufficient taste to admire her trees and flowers."

"And her niece, *Miss Carruthers*," thought George Dallas.

"So pray go round to the house. Don't forget your coat. I see it upon the ground—there. It has got rubbed against the damp bark, and there's a great patch of green upon it."

"That's of no consequence," said George, gaily; "it's only an Amherst coat, and no beauty."

"You must not make little of Amherst," said the girl, with mock gravity, as George stood rubbing the green stain off his coat with his handkerchief; "we regard the town here as a kind of metropolis, and have profound faith in the shops and all to be purchased therein. Did dear old Evans make that coat?"

"A venerable person of that name sold it me," returned George, who had now thrown the coat over his arm, and stood, hat in hand, beside her horse.

"The dear! I should not mind letting him make me a habit," she said. "Good-bye, for the present—that way," again she pointed with her

whip, and then cantered easily off, leaving George in a state of mind which he would have found it very difficult to define, so conflicting were his thoughts and emotions. He looked after her, until the last flutter of her skirt was lost in the distance, and then he struck into the path which she had indicated, and pursued it, musing.

"And that is Clare Carruthers! I thought I had seen that head before, that graceful neck, that crown of golden hair. Yes, it is she; and little she thinks whom she is about to bring into her uncle's house—the outcast and exile from Poynings! I will see it out; why should I not? I owe nothing to Carruthers that I should avoid this fair, sweet girl, because he chooses to banish me from her presence. What a presence it is! What am I that I should come into it?" He paused a moment, and a bitter tide of remembrance and self-reproach rushed over him, almost overwhelming him. Then he went on more quickly, and with a flushed cheek and heated brow, for anger was again rising within him. "You are very clever as well as very obstinate, my worthy stepfather, but you are not omnipotent yet. Your darling niece, the beauty, the heiress, the great lady, the treasure of price to be kept from the sight of me, from the very knowledge of anything so vile and lost, has met me, in the light of day, not by any device of mine, and has spoken to me, not in strained forced courtesy, but of her own free will. What would you think of that, I wonder, if you knew it! And my mother? If the girl should ask my name, and should tell my mother of her chance meeting with a wandering artist, one Paul Ward, what will my mother think?—my dear conscientious mother, who has done for me what wounds her conscience so severely, and who will feel as if it were wounded afresh by this accidental meeting, with which she has nothing in the world to do." He lifted his hat, and fanned his face with it. His eyes were gleaming, his colour had risen; he looked strong, daring, active, and handsome—a man whom an innocent girl, all unlearned in life and in the world's ways, might well exalt in her guileless fancy into a hero, and be pardoned her mistake by older, sadder, and wiser heads.

"How beautiful she is, how frank, how graceful, how unspeakably innocent and refined! She spoke to me with such an utter absence of conventional pretence, without a notion that she might possibly be wrong in speaking to a stranger, who had offered her a civility in her uncle's park. She told that man on the balcony that night that Sir Thomas Boldero was her uncle. I did not remember it when the old man mentioned the name. How long has she been here, I wonder? Is she as much here as at Poynings? How surprised she would be if she knew that I know who she is; that I have heard her voice before to-day; that in the pocket-book she held in her hand a few minutes ago, there lies a withered flower, which she once touched and wore. Good God! What would a

girl like that think of me, if she knew what I am—if she knew that I stole like a thief to the window of my mother's house, and looked in, shivering, a poverty-stricken wretch, come there to ask for alms, while she herself glittered among my mother's company, like the star of beauty and youth she is? How could she but despise me if she knew it! But she will never know it, or me, most likely. I shall try to get away and *work out all this*, far away in a country where no memories of sin, and shame, and sorrow will rise up around me like ghosts. I am glad to have seen and spoken to Clare Carruthers; it must do me good to remember that such a woman really exists, and is no poet's or romancer's dream. I am glad to think of her as my mother's friend, companion, daughter almost. My mother, who never had a daughter, and has, God help her, no son *but me!* But I shall never see her again, most likely. When I reach the house, I shall find a pompous servant, no doubt, charged with Sir Thomas's compliments, and orders to show me round a gallery of spurious Dutch pictures, copies of Raphael and Carlo Dolce, and a lot of languishing Lelys and gluttony-suggesting Knellers."

With these disparaging words in his thoughts, George Dallas reached the border of the park, and found himself in front of the house. The façade was even more imposing and beautiful than he had been led to expect by the distant view of it, and the wide arched doorway gave admittance to an extensive quadrangle beyond. A stone terrace stretched away at either side of the entrance, as at Poynings. Standing on the lower step, a tame peacock displaying his gaudy plumage by her side, he saw Miss Carruthers. She came forward to meet him with a heightened colour and an embarrassed manner, and said:

"I am very sorry, indeed, but Sir Thomas and my aunt are not at home. They had no intention of leaving home when I went out for my ride, but they have been gone for some time." She looked towards a servant who stood near, and added: "I am so sorry; nothing would have given my uncle more pleasure; but if you will allow me, I will send——"

George interrupted her, but with perfect politeness.

"Thank you very much, but, if you will allow me, I will take my leave, and hope to profit by Sir Thomas Boldero's kindness on a future occasion." He bowed deeply, and was turning away, when, seeing that she looked really distressed, he hesitated.

"I will show you the pictures myself, if you will come with me," she said, in a tone so frank, so kindly and engaging, that the sternest critic of manners in existence, supposing that critic to have been any other than an old maid, could not have condemned the spontaneous courtesy as forwardness. "I am an indifferent substitute for my uncle, as a cicerone, but I think I know the names of all the artists, and where all the pictures came from. Stephen," she spoke now

to the servant, "I am going to take this gentleman through the picture-gallery—go on before us, if you please."

So George Dallas and Clare Carruthers entered the house together, and lingered over the old carvings in the hall, over their inspection of the sporting pictures which adorned it, and the dining-room, over the family portraits in the vestibule, the old china vases, and the rococo furniture. Every subject had an interest for them, and they did not think of asking themselves in what that interest originated and consisted. The girl did not know the young man's name, but his voice was full of the charm of sweet music for her, and in his face her fancy read strange and beautiful things. He was an artist, she knew already, which in sober language meant that she had seen a very tolerable sketch which he had made. He was a poet, she felt quite convinced; for did he not quote Tennyson, and Keats, and Coleridge, and even Herrick and Herbert, as they wandered among the really fine and valuable paintings which formed Sir Thomas Boldero's collection, so aptly and with such deep feeling and appreciation as could spring only from a poetic soul?

It was the old story, which has never been truly told, which shall never cease in the telling. Both were young, and one was beautiful; and though the present is an age which mocks at love at first sight, and indeed regards love at all, under any circumstances, with only decent toleration, not by any means amounting to favour, it actually witnesses it sometimes. The young man and the girl—the idle, dissolute, perverted young man—the beautiful, pure, innocent, proud, pious young girl—talked together that spring afternoon, as the hours wore on to evening, of art, of literature, of music, of travel, of the countless things over which their fancy rambled, and which had wondrous charms for her bright intellect and her secluded life, simple and ignorant in the midst of its luxury and refinement. All that was best and noblest in George's mind came out at the gentle bidding of the voice that sounded for him with a new, undreamed-of music; and the hard, cold, wicked world in which he lived, in which hitherto, with rare intervals of better impulses, he had taken delight, fell away from him, and was forgotten. The girl's grace and beauty, refinement and gentleness, were not more conspicuous than her bright intelligence and taste, cultivated, not indeed by travel or society, but by extensive and varied reading. Such was the influence which minute after minute was gaining upon George. And for her? Her fancy was busily at work too. She loved art; it filled her with wonder and reverence. Here was an artist, a young and handsome artist, of unexceptionable manners. She adored poetry, regarding it as a divine gift; and here was a poet—yes, a poet; for she had made Dallas confess that he very often wrote "verses;" but that was his modesty: she knew he wrote poetry—beautiful poetry. Would he ever let her see any of it?

"Yes, certainly," he had answered; "when I am famous, and there is a brisk competition for me among the publishers, I will send a copy of my poems to you."

"To me! But you do not know my name."

"Oh yes I do. You are Miss Carruthers."

"I am; but who told you?"

The question disconcerted Dallas a little. He turned it off by saying, "Why, how can you suppose I could be at Amherst without learning that the niece of Sir Thomas Boldero, of the Sycamores, is Miss Carruthers?"

"Ah, true; I did not think of that," said Clare, simply. "But I do not live here generally; I live with another uncle, my father's brother—Sir Thomas is my mother's—Mr. Capel Carruthers, at Poynings, seven miles from here. Have you heard of Poynings?"

Yes, Mr. Dallas had heard of Poynings; but now he must take his leave. It had long been too dark to look at the pictures, and the young people were standing in the great hall, near the open door, whence they could see the gate and the archway, and a cluster of servants idling about and looking out for the return of the carriage. Clare was suddenly awakened to a remembrance of the lateness of the hour, and at once received her visitor's farewell, gracefully reiterating her assurances that her uncle would gladly make him free of the park for sketching purposes. She would tell Sir Thomas of the pleasant occurrences of the day;—by-the-by, she had not the pleasure of knowing by what name she should mention him to her uncle.

"A very insignificant one, Miss Carruthers. My name is Paul Ward."

And so he left her, and, going slowly down the great avenue among the beeches, met a carriage containing a comely, good-humoured lady and an old gentleman, also comely and good humoured: who both bowed and smiled graciously as he lifted his hat to them.

"Sir Thomas and my lady, of course," thought George; "a much nicer class of relatives than Capel Carruthers, I should say."

He walked briskly towards the town. While he was in Clare's company he had forgotten how hungry he was, but now the remembrance returned with full vigour, and he remembered very clearly how many hours had elapsed since he had eaten. When he came in sight of the railway station, a train was in the act of coming in from London. As he struck into a little by-path leading to the inn, the passengers got out of the carriages, passed through the station gate, and began to straggle up in the same direction. He and they met where the by-path joined the road, and he reached the inn in the company of three of the passengers, who were about to remain at Amherst. Mr. Page was in the hall, and asked George if he would dine.

"Dine?" said George. "Certainly. Give me anything you like, so that you don't keep me waiting; that's the chief thing."

"It is late, sir, indeed," remarked Mr. Page; "half-past seven, sir."

"So late?" said George, carelessly, as he turned into the coffee-room.

DILAPIDATIONS.

DR. JOHNSON legally defines dilapidations as the penalties incurred by "the incumbent (of a parish) for suffering the chancel, or any other edifice of his ecclesiastical living, to go to ruin or decay by neglecting to repair the same; and the term likewise extends to his committing or suffering to be committed any wilful waste in or upon the glebe woods, or any other inheritance of the church." Ayliffe, whom the Doctor quotes, also declares that it is the duty of the churchwarden to prevent such injuries happening to either the chancel or manor-house belonging to the rector or vicar.

The law of dilapidations as it at present stands, oppressive in its working, undefined in its powers, is liable to the most varying interpretations, according to the hardness and greediness, or the generosity and forbearance, of the in-comer.

The system of dilapidations that at present prevails is this. On the death of a rector, the newly appointed clergyman appoints a surveyor; the widow and children of the deceased rector also having a surveyor to watch their interests. Let us call the first, inspector A; the second, B.

It is A's duty to examine the painting, papering, and plastering of the whole house, to see to the roofing, thatching or slating, and to examine the floors. It is B's business, on the other hand, to depreciate A's complaints, to decry the damage he discovers, and to run down all his estimates of the repairs needed. If A think this ceiling wants whitewashing, B suggests that it is scarcely discoloured. If A remark on a floor honeycombed with dry-rot, B tests the soundness of the joists, and limits the cost of restoration as much as possible. If A discover a paper blurred in the corner with damp, and wants a new one, B pleads for its partial restoration, and expatiates on the goodness of all but the extreme left-hand corner. The one tries to extend as far as honesty will allow, the other to limit and contract as much as is possible. If at the end A stoutly resist B's reductions, the matter is referred to an arbitrator, and the two disputants agree to abide by the arbitrator's decision. If B be "thrown," and his reductions put aside, B's clients have to bear all the expense of the arbitration: not gaining much, therefore, by the struggle.

The Church is not a profession for ambitious men. Now and then, a man of special talent and tact obtains a great prize; but the ordinary successes are not encouraging. The Old Guard were said to carry marshals' bâtons in their knapsacks; curates do not, we imagine, often discover presentations to archbishoprics in their letter-boxes. A curate's is a hard and thankless life, with no great future in it, and with little reward

but the self-satisfaction of a good conscience. If a man be quiet and unobtrusive, and do not appear on platforms much, or lay himself out to conciliate bishops, he may very easily grow grey before he gets a living; for there is no brevet for long service in the clerical profession.

A quiet steady persistence in cottage visiting, cottage lecturing, visiting the sick, and teaching the ignorant, terminates, let us say, after twenty years, in the munificent gift of a small living. Let us put Little Caddleton at one hundred and ninety-five pounds. Let us imagine the Reverend Augustus Fifold, married, and having an excellent but invalid wife, who has blessed him with six children, five of whom survive. The hard-worked curate, worn to the bone with anxiety, small debts, and monotonous ungrateful toil (which he once loved for its own sake), is one day startled by the sudden bit of astounding fortune above mentioned. Every one congratulates Mr. Fifold; the pale faces around him brighten. The invalid wife, leaning on his arm, really thinks she feels stronger. The dunning butcher and baker doff their hats, and express their regret that the large sum of money which it was necessary for them to make up the week before last made them rather forget themselves. Farmers grudge the good man his little windfall, and complain that every sermon they hear costs them a guinea; and that they don't see no manner of use in parsons and such black cattle, for their part. Mr. Fifold wishes his people farewell, and sheds honest tears as he does so, for even places where one has been simply and steadily miserable become dear to us in time. The squire, who treats one hundred and ninety-five pounds a year as mere salary for a French cook, and not quite that, wishes Mr. Fifold good luck in a patronising but kindly way.

Moving is the first joy of the new rector. It costs (economically done) forty pounds, and eats deep into the first quarter's income. The additional furnishing is another heavy blow; but then hope, a new position, and a certain income and independence, are before Mr. Fifold, and he soon forgets this trouble.

Now, as we are putting this case in order to show the hardship of the dilapidation law, not the vicissitudes of a clerical life, let us see, in this instance, how they will operate. Mr. Fifold is a sanguine, careless, rather improvident man, but painfully conscientious, and full of all Christian charity and warmth of heart. Accustomed to shift and struggle on the precarious income derived from a varying number of pupils, and constantly hoping for a prize to turn up in the clerical lottery (not to mention that he is cousin to the Bishop of Shetland), he has never dwelt much on the value of money, or the business necessity of clearness and self-protection in money arrangements; guileless himself, he treats all other persons as honest, generous, and trustworthy.

Before moving to the new rectory, his worthy wife sends him down with strict injunctions to measure the rooms, and be careful what

he says: as the archdeacon, in a friendly letter, has mysteriously suggested the need of caution. The ingenious man goes down in state to Little Caddleton, on a bleak March day, when the woods and hills are choked with a rainy mist. He thinks of that unknown future day, when his own successor may in like manner be entering the same gate. He hears that there is a widow with three daughters, and one son, who is a lawyer. In his desire not to wound them, he makes his fly stop half a mile from the house, and wades up a miry lane to the rectory. He rings at the bell, half ashamed of himself, and introduces himself in the kindest and most sympathising way to the widow. She is all tears, all emotion and crape. The daughters and the son appear. Lunch appears. Over the lunch, the son suggests time; they will not be hurried, he hopes? The legal time for them to remain is two months, may they say six?—it is a bitter rooting up for his dear mother. All this time the legal son of the late incumbent is gauging and taking stock of Mr. Fifold's good nature and pliancy. The new rector presently promises them four months for certain, he was nearly promising six, being pressed artfully and suddenly, but he drew in just in time. On his way back, when their interview is over, he almost regrets he did not give the widow all she asked, poor thing!

The house turns out to be an old gable-ended house, netted with vine-boughs, and looking cheerful and pleasant enough, with its dentated Queen Anne porch, and white-framed deep-sunk windows. A long sloping garden (renowned for strawberries) adjoins the house and the glebe meadows. Walking there and inspecting, Mr. Fifold feels already a spiritual peer, a lord of land, a man of independence and social position; and he wishes Lizzy and the children were there to see.

"One thing," says the legal son of the late incumbent, taking Mr. Fifold's arm, and interrupting his complacent meditations, "one thing, my dear sir. How shall the dilapidations be arranged? a mere trifle, of course, as my father spent at least a thousand pounds on the house and offices, and the church has been lately restored by the Throgmoggleton family. Pity to go to the expense of two surveyors. Let us trust to one highly honourable experienced man: Ferker, of Slingsbury. Best for both parties—Ferker, just to a proverb—friend of the bishop's—man of business—highest possible character." Mr. Fifold, of course, is to attend survey and see that all is fair, honourable, and aboveboard. Sorry to be obliged to say, some importance to his poor mother. Like to see the house? Spare room, rather damp, but only wants papering—chancel old but sound, crack or two in plaster, nothing more. Frank man himself, likes frankness in others, despises all pettifogging tricks—shall they say Ferker for both?

Mr. Fifold is charmed with the frankness and business-like promptitude of his predecessor's son. He agrees to everything. He plunges

headlong into the pitfall. He little knows that the house is all dry-rot, and the chancel a plastered-up ruin.

Ferker (about to marry one of the late incumbent's daughters) makes a playful survey, and generously sums up the dilapidations at twenty-seven pounds ten shillings and fourpence-halfpenny. The fixtures, estimated at twenty-four pounds six shillings and twopence, do not leave a very large margin for Mr. Fifold to receive; but in the ignorance of innocence he is happy and delighted. He papers one room, does some whitewashing, and then settles down among his new friends and new duties; he spends half a year's income in enlarging the village schoolroom at his own expense; and, in the sunshine of calmer days, his quiet life flows on. What are dilapidations to the Reverend Augustus Fifold now, but a dream of the past?

Seven years of uninterrupted happiness; parish improved, church enlarged, school increased, walls built round rectory garden, more fruit-trees, great improvements to front entrance—perhaps rather too many for Fifold's income, seeing that John is gone to Eton, and that the three girls require a governess.

By-and-by a cloud comes. Fifold catches a malignant fever from praying beside the bed of a sick man, in one of those miserable close cottage's bedrooms. In spite of two London physicians, his naturally good constitution pulls him through, and he emerges again to the light, but by no means the same man. Some vital organ has been touched; he does not rally, his walks get shorter, he feels the exertion of preaching more. He has to cease first his night-school, then his bi-weekly lecture.

His wife will not see the change, but his friends do, and sorrow over it. One Sunday, while reading the prayers, he faints; next Sunday, while preaching, his speech becomes singularly thick, and he is obliged to pause and plead illness. Next day, when out walking, visiting the poor, he feels lame and benumbed. The same night he is seized with paralysis. He goes away for change, returns slightly better. He preaches before he is recovered, contrary to the express command of the doctor. He cannot afford a substitute, for there is Johnny's outfit for the Navy to buy. He has a second seizure. He sinks gradually in a few months into a broken old man. He is led about by his gardener, the clerk. One day a fatal drowsiness comes over him; he is struck with apoplexy, and dies.

The grave closes over poor Fifold, rector of Little Caddleton. A few weeks afterwards, while the widow's heart is still bleeding, a light alert knock comes at the front door, and the servant announces the Reverend Mr. Harker—a little smart jerky man, sharp and glib as a commercial traveller. With conventional expressions of sympathy, he introduces himself as newly appointed to Little Caddleton. The widow tries to repress her tears, but it is a hard struggle. She now begins to taste the real bitterness of

her loss. She invites the smirking man to lunch. He discusses the parish, and hints at improvements and a new régime. She extols the past, and enlarges on the good done by him who is now dead. Mr. Harker glances at the blinds and the bookcases, and says they may do with a little alteration. He is very sorry, but he feels he cannot allow the widow a day beyond the legal two months. Expense and inconvenience of delay, enormous. Will she sell all her furniture? No? Should have liked to purchase it at a valuation.

After his lunch, the little man trips out, gaily lectures the poor on their improvidence, tells them that he means to turn over a new leaf with all the clubs, runs to see the stables as he wishes to keep a pony-carriage, shakes his head at the rather leaky chancel, wishes that the rectory had three more bedrooms, is inducted with nonchalance, and dashes off in a fly he has sent for, to catch the London train—7.30 P.M. express—having first measured all the rooms and named his surveyor for dilapidations.

Odious supplanter, selfish and unfeeling, thinks the widow, and contrasts him with the dead, who still seems to sit in his old place and to fill the well-known seat. Dilapidations, indeed, and everything new, and of the best quality? Aroused by a letter from the new rector, the widow tardily, as a mere matter of form, appoints a surveyor to meet whomsoever Mr. Harker shall appoint. The dilapidations on her husband's coming into the living were, she remembers, twenty-seven pounds ten shillings and fourpence-halfpenny; the fixtures, twenty-four pounds six shillings and twopence. Now, of course, the dilapidations will be far less, and the fixtures more. The remaining profit will pay for the moving, or even add something to the money on which she has to live and to support her children. She looks round the house with sorrow, for it must soon be left. She regards it with pride, because it is so neat and so like the house of a gentleman. There is nothing for her husband's successor to complain of.

The surveyors come. A long business letter awakes her from her dream. The gay and careless Mr. Harker had gathered quite enough from her to serve his purpose. His surveyor reports a total decay of all the bedroom floors, leaky thatch, defective roof; a wood-house (removed fourteen years before by the late rector) must be rebuilt, and a wall rebuilt in the chancel—total, four hundred and thirty-four pounds six shillings and sevenpence-halfpenny. The surveyor adds a note, to the effect that the bedroom floors are of English deal instead of Norwegian, and that but for the goodness of the brick in the side walls the rectory would have had to be entirely rebuilt. The chancel alone will cost eighty-two pounds ten shillings. New walls built cannot be allowed for. Mr. Fifold's widow will derive no benefit from the gates Mr. Fifold put up, or the melon-frames he bought, or the orna-

mental shrubs and fruit-trees he planted. The fixtures will be sixty pounds, and no more. The claim, though hard, is just, and it is useless to submit it to arbitration. There is no appeal against it; and in the midst of all this distress and entanglement the time for leaving the house comes.

Mrs. Fifold leaves the old house tearfully, and sits down in the rooms she has taken at a neighbouring village, to consider her position. Mr. Fifold was not a provident man (it is your snug wealthy man who is provident); he had assured his life for three thousand pounds, but out of that sum is to be taken the four hundred and thirty-four pounds six shillings and sevenpence-halfpenny for dilapidations, forty pounds for moving. So much more for funeral and testamentary charges. The inevitable result is, lodgings in Rosemarine-row, South Lambeth; the withdrawal of Johnny from Eton; the suspension of the governess, and extreme poverty; until Johnny, having relinquished his taste for the sea, enters a mercantile house as a clerk, and helps to maintain the family, and get the girls out as governesses.

Now there is something rotten in all this. In every cathedral town, in every diocese, there are plenty of sinecurists and ambiguous unpaid officials. Why could not one be appointed to see that unbusiness-like and generous men do not incur gross injustice? A fixed fee could be appointed for such services, and its payment divided between the executor of a late incumbent and his successor. The survey should be one of the severest routine, extending to the minutest thing connected with the stability of the rectory and chancel. A small sum might be deducted annually from the proceeds of every living, and reserved for the purpose of defraying this charge; the excess to be handed to the widow; the deficiency, on the other hand, to be supplied her.

At present, the law is too elastic and too undefined. An artful executor may hoodwink or deceive the in-comer, if he be careless, hasty, easy, or generous. The just payment for real wear and tear may be altogether frittered away, to the injury, or even ruin, of the in-comer's widow and children. In the same way a lax or interested surveyor may consent to so low an estimate on the departure of the executor or executrix, that the next demand will be oppressively heavy. If a chancel were ruinous, a diocesan official surveyor would prevent its being fraudulently patched up, and would exact full value for the dilapidation. At present, it is a mere chance whether a chancel that would cost sixty pounds to restore, is not glossed over so as to bring in only ten pounds to the in-comer. A few years more, and the injury that could have been mended for sixty pounds may require a hundred pounds.

Bishops, archdeacons, think of these things, and remember that they are evils which can be remedied. Dilapidations should not be left to private arrangement. A small village living

is no great prize after twenty or thirty years' toil in humble drudgery to advance great objects, after long years spent in reconciling enemies, in chiding the bad, in encouraging the good, in consoling the dying, in teaching the young, in aiding the oppressed, in correcting the ignorant, in guiding the rich, in succouring the poor, in soothing the unhappy. Such a prize should assuredly not lead, on the death of its winner, to the mortification and impoverishment of his widow, and perhaps even to the degradation and beggary of his children. It should be rendered impossible for any executor to evade payment of a just claim to the injury of the unoffending widow of his successor. If there were no claims for dilapidations, dishonest and mean people would never repair rectories; but, as the law now stands, there is a constant effort, on the one hand, to avoid any payment, and, on the other, to make the charge as ruinously high and unmerciful as possible.

HAVANA CIGARITOS.

WHEREABOUTS, I wonder, did those wonderful literary gentlemen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who were in the habit of writing epic poems, and, more amazing still, who persuaded people into reading them, keep the Muse whom they so frequently invoked? Did she stand at livery, with Pegasus, and the bird of Jove, and Juno's peacocks, and Phœbus's fiery steeds, and other curiosities of natural history, always ready to be trotted out when it occurred to the literary gentlemen that a Somethingsiad in Twelve Cantos would be precisely the kind of thing to take the town, make the fortune of Mr. Osborn or Mr. Tonson, or extract a score of gold pieces from the Peer of the Realm and Patron of the Muses to whom the Somethingsiad was to be dedicated? I want to know what that Muse did when she wasn't under process of invocation. It is my opinion that she was a lazy Muse; for we frequently find the literary gentlemen bidding her, with some sharpness, Arise, or Awake, or Tell, or Say something which, according to their divination, she had to communicate. She seems, also, to have been a Muse who had something to give, and was worth flattering; since that the literary gentlemen often addressed her by such endearing epithets as Gentle, Heavenly, Benign, and Discreet. But they never told anybody where the Muse lived, or how she was to be "got at." I fear she was to be heard of most frequently in the neighbourhood of Grub-street, at the sign of the Satchel, where the Greek translators lay three in a bed, and the gentleman who did Pindaric odes could only go out on Sundays through terror of the bailiffs, and the watchful landlady kept the ladder of the cock-loft occupied by the Scholar and Divine who did High Church polemics for Mr. Lintot for half-a-crown a sheet. We have been told a vast deal within these latter days about the Curiosi-

ties, the Pursuits, the Amenities, the Miseries, of literature; but the polite world has yet much to learn concerning that Muse. Was her inspiration to be had for the paying for, and did she give credit? By-the-by, she was sometimes called Coy, and I have heard her designated as Intrepid; but that was in a birthday ode about the battle of Dettingen. Her personal history, manners, and customs, are, however, shrouded in mystery. The sum of what the literary gentlemen have told us in her regard is this: that she played upon a Lyre, and resided on a Mount.

It is a very painful and humiliating thing to be fain to confess that, on the threshold of an article which will not contain one line of poetry, but will be of the very plainest prose on the very plainest of subjects, I would give my ears to find a Muse who, for a reasonable consideration, would permit me to invoke her, and would inspire my Lay, and enable me to get to the end of it without committing five hundred blunders. Is there a Muse of Memory? I am afraid there is not: but it is a Muse of that kind I wish to apostrophise. And if I addressed her as Snuffy, or as Smoky, or even as Cloudy, I should be deemed either stupid or irreverent. Still, I desire no less than a Muse who is given to taking tobacco, a Muse who smokes a pipe, a Muse who can twist a cigarito; but chiefly a Muse who will make me remember things. It is my ardent wish to return once more to the island of Cuba, and to relate as much as I can call to mind about the famous cigars of Havana. I mentioned some months since that I was a teetotum, and when I last addressed the reader—on the subject, I believe, of the Havana one-horse chaises—I was in the Kärnthner Strasse in Vienna. I have spun round most violently since I last took that liberty. Dear me! where *is* Havana and all my lore about cigars? My note-book is at the bottom of the Lake of Garda; and I know that I began an article on cigars, one morning, at Trieste, wrote the next paragraph at Milan, and cancelled both as too digressional, at Samaden, in the canton of the Grisons. Just now, as I sit down despondingly, and wish I had attended the lectures of the professor who discourses on memory at the Royal Polytechnic Institution, the bells of Santa Maria della Salute at VENICE strike twelve at midnight, and my Muse, hitherto coy to churlishness, appears, and grants me all I wish. She is a nut-brown Muse—nay, darker than the nut: as dark as chocolate. She is round, and smooth, and graceful, and is deliciously fragrant. I take her up very tenderly between my finger and thumb, and pressing her to my lips, bite off her nose. Then do I apply the flame of a waxen taper to her feet, and I begin to smoke my Muse. Straightway, in the spiral whirls of blue incense curling from my last cigar, the inspiration which I needed glides softly down upon me. Cuba comes back. The ghosts of a hundred memories start up, and drum cheerfully on the lids of rose-coloured

coffins. Wars and rumours of wars, camps, cities, seas, storms, and sick-beds, all fade away, and here I am in the Calle del Teniente Rey at Havana, bargaining with a volante-driver to take me and a companion to the great tobacco-factory of La Honradez.

I remember it all. I went over the establishment, say only yesterday. First, we found out a dark counting-house in a darker street down town: both made artificially sombre by screens and curtains—for the sun was salamandering about with his usual ferocity outside—and sought Don Domingo. Most courteous of clerks in a Cuban banking-house was he. A tawny man with a close-cropped head of silver-grey, like an over-ripe orange slightly mildewed at top, his thews and sinews all dried in the sun, like South American dried beef, but given, like that under the action of warm water, to becoming quite soft and tender when you were admitted to his intimacy. Don Domingo was intimately acquainted with the proprietors of La Honradez. To judge from the very high-dried odour which continually hung about him, he must have spent at La Honradez, himself, a handsome annual income in snuff and cigars. He gave us a Regalia apiece, to keep us in good spirits until we reached the factory, and then we picked our way through a maze of packing-cases and strong boxes, and, reaching La Calle del Teniente Rey, bargained, as I have said, with a volante-driver, and were soon set down before the portal of which we were in quest.

I think the place had been, prior to the suppression of the monastic orders, a convent. It was large enough to have been that, or a barrack, or a penitentiary. The walls were amazingly thick; but the windows, few as they were in number, were neither so rare nor so thickly grated but that the odour of fresh-chopped tobacco came gushing through them, like telegraphic messages from the State of Virginia and the Vuelta de Abaco. Have you ever driven along the Paris Boulevards at very early morning? Have you ever noticed the fragrance issuing from the cafés on your line of route—the smell of the coffee roasting and grinding for the day's consumption? The garçons bring their mills on to the pavement, and, from six to seven a.m. the Boulevards smell like Araby the Blest. Substitute tobacco for coffee, and you have the street savour of La Honradez. Penetrating into the great Patio, the aroma became, perhaps, a trifle too forcible. It was as that, say, of the most delicate devil's dust thrown up by the sweetest shoddy-mills. It was as though you were off some guano islands, the haunt only of birds of paradise. It is nevertheless certain that the air was laden with impalpable powder; that a sirocco of small-cut speedily filled your mouth, ears, and nostrils, and the pores of your skin; and that your first salutation to La Honradez was a violent fit of sneezing. The court-yard was full of broken boxes and the banana-leaf or maize-straw wrappers of tobacco bales, long since minced, and twisted, and

smoked. There was an immense deal of litter and rubbish about; for, it must be owned, tidiness is not a thing you must expect to find in the tropics. There were also a number of the sable sons of toil, and the hapless children of bondage, lying about in attitudes suggestive to the artistic student of every conceivable variety of foreshortening. They were asleep, and dreaming, probably, of pumpkin. Slavery I hold to be the dreariest and most detestable of treadmills; but in Cuba the thralls doomed to the degrading discipline of the "stepper" seem to be oftener off than on the wheel, and either exercise or the want of it has a tendency towards making them comfortably fat. As a rule, if at broad noonday you see a negro awake, he is free. If asleep, he is a slave.

At La Honradez only cigarettes, cigaritos, papelitos, or whatever else you choose to call the little rolls of tissue paper containing finely chopped smoking tobacco, are made. The process is very simple; and we took the place only as a whet or relish before the more serious tobacco banquet which we were subsequently to enjoy at the great cigar manufactory of—CABANA.

We passed through numbers of barn-like rooms, vast and dim, where, squatting on the floor in groups, negro men, women, and children were sorting the tobacco, stripping the leaves from the stalks, and arranging them in baskets for the chopping-mills. There exists a notion that any kind of tobacco is good enough to make cigarettes with, and that, on the principle said to be adopted in some sausage-making establishments, anything that comes near enough to the machine, be it beef, or pork, or a dog, or a cat, or a man, is forthwith sucked into the vortex, and converted into polonies or saveloys. This notion, so far as it regards cigaritos, is, I am happy to believe, groundless.

Very great care seemed to be taken in the assortment of the leaves and the selection of the prime parts; and I was assured that the paper cigars of La Honradez were made from the choicest Havana tobacco obtainable. They are, certainly, very delicious to smoke. La Honradez is, itself, modestly conscious of its own merits, and on the little chromo-lithographed wrappers which surround each bundle of twenty-five cigaritos you read this motto: "Mis hechos mi justifican"—"My worth shall justify me." Other factories are more self-laudatory and less modest. "Todos mi elogian"—"All praise me," says one, on its wrappers. This may be true, only the establishment ought not to say so. "Mi fama per Porbe vuela"—"My fame is world wide," exclaims a third. This, again, is a little too self-asserting; for I would bet a reasonable number of gold ounces that my present respected reader never heard of that particular establishment for making cigaritos.

The paper cigars of Havana are not perfect cylinders, closed at one end with a dexterous

twist, and provided at the other with a mouth-piece of twisted cardboard and a morsel of cotton wool to absorb the essential oil. Those are the famous Russian cigarettes, made at St. Petersburg or Moscow, of Turkish, Syrian, and Bessarabian tobacco. The Havana cigaritos consist mostly of so much finely chopped tobacco placed in the middle of a little square of very thin paper, neatly rolled up into elliptical bâtons about an inch and a half long and an eighth of an inch thick, and closed at each end with a dexterous twist. The art of making them lies in there being just enough loose paper at the ends, but no more, to make the required twist, and in there being a perfectly homogeneous consistency of tobacco throughout the entire length. If the roll be too tight, or if, on the other hand, the tobacco be not evenly distributed, and it bulges in one part and is loose in another, the cigarito is useless. Indeed, it must be made with almost perfect nicety, to satisfy consumers: for almost every Spaniard has in his own fingers an innate gift for twisting and rolling his own cigaritos. We have grown quite familiar, owing to the French "sans nom" paper which, for a season or two, obtained immense vogue in Paris, with the tiny blank books from which leaves of tissue paper could be torn to serve as envelopes for the tobacco. Neither the French nor the Germans, however, ever attained great proficiency in this most difficult and delicate art. The Italians abominate cigaritos, preferring to smoke the more abominable cigars of native manufacture; and I think that the majority of Englishmen could more easily learn to curl hair or play on the mandolin—two arts in which they are never very likely to excel—than to roll cigarettes. To the Spaniard the trick comes naturally. He would roll up a papelito and twist it faultlessly, in a third-class carriage in the middle of the Box Tunnel. The old Spaniards, however, it must be owned, are the best hands, or rather the best digits, at papelito making. The tropics take it out of a man, and the Creole Cuban is fain to allow his slaves to manufacture his cigars for him. Moreover, in Cuba, cigarettes are but a pastime. His real repast is in the Puros, or Havanas of the weed itself; whereas in old Spain, genuine Havanas are, through the idiotic financial policy of the government, so difficult to obtain, and cigars of native manufacture are so execrable, that the Castellanos smoke cigaritos in self-defence.

Picking, sorting, and chopping tobacco, and packing it up in the little squares of tissue paper constitute only one section of the art cultivated at La Honradez. Some hundreds of young women and children, blacks, mulattoes, and quadroons, are employed in cutting and folding the paper, and in packing the cigarettes into bundles and gumming the wrappers. These wrappers themselves necessitate the maintenance of a very large chromo-lithographic establishment; and in an airy studio—the sun's rays, however, tempered by screens of white gauze—

we found a number of Creole Spaniards at work busily designing on stone the fantastic devices and pretty little vignettes, enveloped in which the far-famed cigaritos of La Honradez go forth to the world. The workmen who print these designs in colours, and manage a very elaborate steam lithographic press (made, as I deciphered from a cast-iron inscription, at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States), are a very odd kind of people indeed. They are not negroes, they are not mulattoes, they are not quadroons, still less are they criollos or Creole Cubans, or Peninsulares, that is to say, European Spaniards. They are not precisely slaves; yet they cannot exactly be termed free. There is one of these odd workmen perched on a high stool by the side of the machine, and intent on adjusting the pins to the due and proper register of one of the coloured wrappers. He is a limber-limbed young fellow, very thin, with very long slender fingers, the which, with patient deftness, he knows well how to use. His complexion is of uniform pale saffron, of the texture of parchment, and he is perfectly beardless. He has very long lustrous black hair falling over his shoulders. In the centre of his countenance, which, in its yellow smoothness does not ill resemble a boiled batter-pudding, show, like currents in the said pudding, a pair of little sharp black eyes. His forehead is very low, his cheekbones are very high, and about his lips there lingers continually a scarcely definable yet ineffable simper of complacent beatitude, due, perhaps, to an inward consciousness of merit, or to opium, or to sheer innate imbecility.

Where have you seen that parchment face, those eyes, that upturned calmly conceited smirk, before? On a tea-tray? On a tea-chest? On a fan? On a rice-paper view of the Porcelain Pagoda at Nankin? To whom, in fine, should those features and that expansion belong, but to a brother of the sun and moon, a native of the flowery land, a denizen of the Celestial empire? They appertain, indeed, here to a Chinese coolie. Where, you may ask, are his shaven poll and his pigtail? That question is easily answered. The coolies in Havana let their hair grow, and are soon persuaded to discard their umbrellahats, nankeen knickerbockers, and bamboo shoes, for the ordinary cool white linen habiliments of the West Indies. More than this, and, strange enough to say, they do, as a rule, submit to be baptised, to change their Celestial designations for names taken from the Christian hagiology, and so become, to all outward appearance, very decent Roman Catholics. Among Protestants, in California and Australia, the Chinaman clings most tenaciously to his native idolatry and his native customs, which are very nasty. He sticks to his tail, he sets up his joss-house, he burns perfumed paper to the gods of genteel morals, he eats with chopsticks, and even imports dried ducks and other culinary nastiness from Canton or Chusan to feed upon. But in Cuba, no sooner does he submit his pigtail to the barber's shear, and allow the priest to

change his name from Kwang-Lew-Fung to José Maria, than he becomes at least as good a Christian as the negro: which is not saying much. To the end of the chapter, however, he remains essentially an odd fish. He is a capital workman, patient, cheerful, cunning, and industrious enough when he chooses; but he does not always choose, and is subject to capricious intervals of monkey-like laziness, and of a disposition to mutiny: always in a restless, spiteful, monkey-like manner. It is quite useless to reason with him, for he has his own notions of logic and his own code of ethics. By the law he cannot be flogged; but his masters sometimes take the law into their own hands. If he be thrashed, he goes out and commits suicide. He whose forefathers may have been over-civilised some thousands of years ago, and the negro who seems never to have been civilised at all since the world began, are about the most hopelessly impracticable beings ever created to be the curse and despair of philanthropists and missionaries. The more honour, perhaps, to the courage and devotion of the missionaries and philanthropists who persist in trying to reclaim the irreclaimable, and to wash the blackamoor white, and to take away the spots from the leopard. Brave hearts! May they go on trying, and never say die!

There are two hundred thousand of these coolies, it is said, in Cuba. The vast majority of them are up the country, in the tobacco and sugar plantations. They are the substitute for slavery, as electro-ware is the substitute for silver. They are as difficult to keep in good order, and as generally unsatisfactory as substitutes for anything are generally found, on trial, to be. In the towns, they are employed to a considerable extent as mechanics and as cooks; in more than one private house I have found Chinese footmen and body-servants. They are said to be not unlike cats in their characters: necessary, harmless—till they are crossed—sharp, quiet, noiseless, contemplative, and very deceitful. There is a kind of jail or market for coolies at a place called El Corro, near Havana, and there they are sold—I mean, there “contracts” can be made with their “trustees” for their labour for a stated term. At El Corro you may see them in their native dress, and with their crowns shaven, all but a tuft on the top—the stump of their departed tails. A coolie may be purchased, or “contracted” for, at a price varying between three and four hundred dollars. You are bound to pay the Chinaman you have bought, four dollars per month, and to give him his victuals and two suits of clothes per year. For this he is bound to you for eight years. The contract is put in writing before a juez de paz, and two copies are made, one in Chinese and the other in Spanish, to be kept respectively by the seller and the sold. The strongest guarantee for the Chinaman receiving decent treatment at the hands of his master is the almost certainty of the former's committing suicide if

he be beaten. Why the Celestial, who, in his own country, has been weaned on a course of bamboo, and has "eaten stick," as the Arabs say, every day of his life, should so bitterly resent corporal punishment at the hands of the stranger, I am unable to explain. This, however, is the fact.

For my part, I thought the Chinaman had done very well to change his name from Kwang-Lew-Fung to José Maria, and let his hair grow, and sit on a high stool printing coloured labels. Chromo-lithography is one of the prettiest pursuits imaginable; and surely it was better to follow it here in peace, and with something like a hire for one's labour, than to be fishing for ducks from a barge on the Canton river, or painting miniatures on the coffin of your grandmother, against that respected person's decease, or addressing hieroglyphic compliments in Indian ink to the gods of genteel morals. After all, the alcalde is preferable to the local mandarin, with his incessant bamboo.

We went to see the place where the coolie workmen of the Honradez were lodged. The dormitories were, for Cuba, wonderfully clean and airy; under proper discipline, I was told, the Chinaman could be made to observe extraordinary neatness and propriety. The beds, or bunks, were in tiers one above the other, as in a passenger steamer; but were much more spacious. Every coolie had his locker for his clothes, and a shelf for his platter, pannikin, and drinking-mug. Above every bunk was printed the name of its occupant. I read a most orthodox catalogue of José Marias, Andres, Augustins, Basilio, Benitos, Beltrans, Cristobals, Manuels, Eustaquios, Gils, Enriques, Jacobos, Pepes, Jaymes, Jnans, Domingos, Lazaros, Mauricio, Pablos, Filipes, Rafacels, Estebans, Tadcocs, Tomascs, Vicentes, and Guiller-mos. There was one Esquilo, or Eschylus, and one Napoleone, who—the last—was described as the biggest rascal in the whole gang; the which reminded me that names very seldom suit their possessors, and that the only man I ever knew who had been christened Virgil was a most egregious donkey.

We were not allowed to leave La Honradez without an "obsequy" or complimentary offering, and, according to the etiquette of Spanish politeness, this backshish was administered in the most delicate and artful manner. We were asked to sign our names and addresses in the visitors' book, and then, on some pretext or another, we were taken to a remote apartment. Just as we were quitting the establishment, and were thanking the superintendent for the great kindness and courtesy he had shown us, a coolie stepped forward, and, with a low bow and an inimitable smile, presented each of our party with a packet of cigaritos, on whose labels, flourishing in chromo-lithography, were our christian and surnames, printed at full length. The operation had been effected in about six minutes. It is certain that they have a very nice way of doing things in the West Indies and Mexico. Scarcely

a day passed without somebody giving me something, and I came back to New York with a trunk-full of "obsequies."

COUSIN JANE.

WHEN my little cousin, Jane Lumley, came to me one morning, and said in her blushing way: "Cousin William, Mr. Forbes has proposed to me, and I have accepted him," I felt that I must be a very old cousin indeed, a very safe cousin as girls would say, or she would never have chosen me for a confidant.

I was pleased, and I was sorry, to hear the tidings. I was pleased, because it was a very good offer; and I was sorry, because Mr. Forbes would take Jane away—selfish animal!—and though I had never cared to marry her myself, I thought it a hard case to see her marry another. However, as pleasure had come first, so it was the predominant feeling, and I shook hands with Jane, and congratulated her on her good fortune. For it was decidedly good fortune. Mr. Forbes, though a widower, was not thirty; he was good looking and accomplished; he was well off too, and had a charming home within a convenient distance of London; in short, he was a most eligible husband for Jane, who had not a farthing of her own, and who owed the very clothes she wore, to my father's kindness. Not that he thought it much kindness, dear old boy. Jane was his pet, and I feel pretty sure that he considered Mr. Forbes a very fortunate man in having secured her. Of course, I thought so too, for I knew Jane's value. Still, Mr. Forbes's offer puzzled me.

Jane had come with her little story to me in the garden; we were alone in one of the green arbours. She stood in the shade, bareheaded, modest, with a happy blush on her cheek, and a soft dewy light in her brown eyes. I had never seen her look half so well in her whole life as she looked then—and, shall I say it?—Jane did not look at all pretty! No, not at all. No one, indeed, could call Jane ugly or even plain; but there was an absence of beauty in her face, which was the more remarkable that pretty girls abounded in our county. She had a nice figure, a graceful carriage, a pleasant voice, and a happy look; that she had, and no more. She was also a sensible girl, clever, well bred, and amiable, though dreadfully shy with strangers; but how could Mr. Forbes know anything of Jane save her shyness? He had not seen her more than a dozen times in all, and Jane was so quiet, that he must be a very penetrating and far-seeing man indeed if he had discovered her merits during those brief interviews. I ventured on expressing some surprise. "How sly you both have been, Jenny," I said.

"No, William, not at all sly, I assure you," she replied, gravely. "I had no idea Mr. Forbes thought of such a thing till he mentioned it the other day."

"Then you did not say 'yes' at once, Jenny?"

"How could I? I was so confused that I should not even have asked for time to think over it, if he had not made the suggestion."

It was very plain that Jane was not in love; but then how odd if he were! I had seen them together the day before this, and Mr. Forbes, for a young man, was a cool lover, to say the least of it. Despite her inexperience in such matters, Jane felt some surprise too, and she expressed it with a mixture of sauciness and simplicity which she often displayed with me, but which she had certainly never showed to Mr. Forbes.

"Do you know, cousin William," she said, looking up at me, "I must be a very fascinating person after all. I am not pretty, I am twenty-three, I am not rich, I am quiet, and yet Mr. Forbes, who has only to pick and choose, is smitten with me."

"How do you know he is smitten?" I inquired.

I repented the question at once; but, luckily, Jane only laughed.

"Why should he want to marry me if he were not smitten?" she asked, gaily.

"Ah! to be sure. And you are smitten, of course, Jenny?"

"No," was her rather serious reply. "I admire Mr. Forbes, and I am grateful for his affection; but though I hope to be very happy with him, I am not what is called in love, cousin William. That is not in my way, I suppose."

And Jenny just uttered a little tremulous sigh of regret, and looked like an ancient maiden who bids adieu to love and its follies; but who, though conscious of her wisdom, feels rather mournful to be so very wise. These little fanciful ways and conceits, which tempered her good sense, and made it endurable—for mere good sense is apt to be dreadfully oppressive—were Jane's real fascination, in my opinion. I could understand that a man should be allured by them; but they were never displayed unless in intimacy, and Mr. Forbes could know nothing about them. Still he *must* be smitten, as Jane said; for why else should he wish to marry her?

If hurry be a proof of love, Mr. Forbes was very much in love. He wanted to marry Jane offhand; and when my aunt Mary, who kept house for us, remonstrated a little indignantly, Mr. Forbes showed some temper. He submitted, however, and the courtship went on. I could not help seeing a good deal of it, and I did not like what I saw. Jane, silly child, seemed quite happy with such attentions as Mr. Forbes paid to her; but if she was satisfied, I was not. Mr. Forbes went through love-making most conscientiously; but I remembered my flirtation with Grace Anley seven years before, and I thought it was something very different from this. I never caught Mr. Forbes giving Jane any of those looks which had made me so dreadfully ridiculous in those days; I never saw him raised to bliss or sunk to despair by anything my little cousin said or did; and what was very

significant, I never once saw him try to be alone with her. I drew the pitiless conclusion that Mr. Forbes, though one of the cleverest men I knew, had nothing to say to Jane.

I was alone with her on the evening before the wedding-day. We sat in the parlour, by one of the open windows, and we looked out at the garden. I could not help thinking that this garden would seem very dull and lonely when my little cousin Jenny was gone. No more should I hear her gaily carolling in the morning, as she ran down the alleys, light and blithe as a bird on the wing. No more would I see her reading in one of the arbours as intent as a young Muse. No more would the waving of her muslin dress or the pattering of her little feet on the gravel give me pleasant thoughts of youth and girlhood. She was going off to Paris with that cold Mr. Forbes, and after their honeymoon trip he would take her to his house and keep her there for ever. These were dismal thoughts; so, with a groan, I said:

"You are going away to-morrow, Jane?"

"Yes," she answered, in a low voice. "Do you know, I can scarcely believe it, cousin William."

"Nonsense," I said, a little crossly. "You like it. I have no doubt you are desperately in love with Mr. Forbes by this time."

"No, I am not," she replied, with one of her little solemn ways; "it is very odd, but I am not in love with Mr. Forbes, in spite of all his devotion to me."

Mr. Forbes's settlements had been very liberal indeed, but other devotion I had not seen.

"It is very wrong," continued poor Jenny, in a tone of keen remorse; "but it is no fault of mine, you know. Nevertheless, I spoke to Mr. Forbes about it the other day."

"Did you, though?" I exclaimed, rather startled at this unnecessary piece of candour.

"Yes; and he said it did not matter, that we should be very happy together, and that I would be, he knew, a good mother to his little boy."

Jane's simplicity and Mr. Forbes's coolness both confounded me. It was plain he was no more in love with Jane than Jane was with him. Only, why on earth did he want to marry her? How did he know that she would make a good mother to his little boy? Jane had no sort of experience concerning children, and was not even very fond of them. She liked them, to be sure; but I had never seen her go baby mad, like Grace Anley. Mischievous little flirt, she knew it became her, I suppose. Well, well! I have had my revenge. I saw Grace the other day—she is now Mrs. Grant—and Grace, my nymph, my sylph, has grown stout.

I don't exactly know what reply I gave little Jane; I dare say some truism about the non-necessity of ardent love on her part, for she said, in her serious way:

"So I think, cousin William; besides, you know, feeling that deficiency, I must, of course, make it up by being ever so much better than I

might have been if I had returned all Mr. Forbes's feelings."

But she sighed; perhaps the prospect of being so very good seemed a little austere to my young cousin. Aunt Mary came in and put an end to the conversation. I went out to smoke a cigar, and did not see Jane till the next morning.

A pleasant blushing bride my cousin looked, almost pretty, and quite happy. Mr. Forbes was, as usual, very handsome; a little pale, perhaps, but I am bound to say that he went through the trying marriage ceremony with manly fortitude. When it was over, he seemed to have cast a weight of care away, and accepted our congratulations and good wishes with something like a happy smile. The wedding breakfast was late, and I did not see much of him before we all sat down; but, when we did so, I thought Mr. Forbes looked a very excitable bridegroom, and that even quiet little Jane had very fitful spirits for a bride. I drew no conclusions until Jane entered the library, where I stood alone, to bid me good-bye. We had spent many pleasant hours in that library, and I did not wonder that Jane showed some emotion on finding me there. But when she came up to me, and, instead of taking my hand, threw her arms around my neck and laid her cold cheek to mine, and burst into sobs and tears, I felt a wonder verging on alarm.

"Jane, my dear girl, my darling, what ails you?" I said, anxiously.

"I am going away," she sobbed; "oh, cousin William, I am going away!"

She would say no more. She was going away, but surely she had known that all along; and surely it was not to go and leave us that could put her in such a state of despair as this. I could get no explanation from her. There was no time. The carriage was waiting; they were looking for her.

"I am coming, I am coming!" she cried, darting from me, and speaking in a light-hearted voice. I followed her out. Mr. Forbes handed her into the carriage, stepped in after her, and my little cousin Jane, now Mrs. Forbes, was gone for ever from amongst us.

Jane had not been long married when my father died. Aunt Mary was ordered to the south of France, and I remained alone with the housekeeper. These were dreary days. I wished now I had proposed to Jane, and married her; I fancied we should have made a happier couple than Mr. and Mrs. Forbes. She wrote now and then; she never complained, but she never once said, "I am happy." She praised Mr. Forbes and his house, and spoke of her position and her comforts—of herself, never. The theme that most frequently recurred in her letters was Arthur, Mr. Forbes's little boy. She recorded his sayings and doings with evident fondness, and I began to think that a young bride whose mind was so much engrossed by her husband's child could not be a very happy one. I had received a general invitation to Mr. Forbes's house, and though Jane did not once remind me

of it, I resolved to visit the Elms. It would be a change; besides, I wanted to see why Jane was not happy. I am bound to say that, though my visit was unexpected, Mr. Forbes received me very cordially.

"Jane will be delighted to see you," he said; "she is out with my little boy."

Jane came in presently with a sickly peevish-looking little fellow—the wonderful Arthur, about whom she had had so much to write. She coloured on seeing me, but delight in her face I saw not. If I could have believed it of Jane, I should have thought she was sorry I had come. She stammered a welcome, however, but, as I soon perceived, shunned every opportunity of remaining alone with me. Once I caught her on the staircase.

"Well, Jane, are you happy?" I whispered.

"Oh, quite happy," she replied, airily. "Is not the Elms a charming place?" And she made her escape.

Yes, the Elms was a charming place; a brown old house, spacious and convenient, with a gay flower-garden around it, and beyond this a region of ancient elm-trees scattered on a grassy slope. Truly the mistress of this pleasant abode and well-ordered household, the wife of that handsome agreeable gentleman, ought to have been a happy woman; but she was not. I saw it at once. Jane had grown thin and pale, and looked sad and careworn. Nor did Mr. Forbes look a happy man. I did not like the rigid lines which a few months had made in his handsome face. He was very kind to his wife, and strictly polite; but of fondness, of love, of tenderness, I saw no sign. He kept these for his child, who was certainly one of the most ill-tempered little three-year-old wretches I had ever seen. Yet Jane seemed to rival her husband in doting affection for that little monkey, who began our acquaintance by making faces at me, and followed it up by biting my leg before dinner. "He was a great sufferer," apologetically said his father.

I thought I was the sufferer in this particular instance, but I bore the pain—I have the mark to this day—with that heroism which politeness alone can inspire. I did not intend paying Mr. Forbes and his wife a long visit; but our intentions have little power over the course of events. That same evening I took a walk with Mr. Forbes, stumbled over the root of a tree, and sprained my ankle. It was very provoking. My sprain was one of the worst; the doctor who was called in ordered rest—total rest, he said. In short, I was condemned to spend many days, some weeks, perhaps, at the Elms. Mr. Forbes behaved unexceptionably; he was cordial, he was kind, he was hospitable; and my little Jane, on seeing me in severe pain, became once more my dear little Jane of old times. She was a good deal with me—I mean alone with me. Her husband had business in London, and went there daily; and whilst I lay stretched on a sofa in the parlour, Jane sat and worked and watched Arthur and his maid out in the garden.

"Jane," I said to her one day, after biding my time, "why are you not happy?"

Jane became crimson, and I saw her little fingers tremble as she vainly tried to threadle her needle.

"I—I am very happy," she stammered.

"No, Jane, you are not; neither is Mr. Forbes. I do not want to meddle between you; but yet, Jane, if a word of sound sensible advice from cousin William would help to set matters right, why not give yourself the chance, and him the pleasure, of that word?" Her colour came and went; her work dropped on her lap; she clasped her hands and said:

"Oh! if you could—if you could tell me something—advise me, I mean. Oh! cousin William, if you could make my husband like me!"

"I always suspected this," I replied, rather ruefully; "but, child, I must know why he married you. Do you know?"

"Oh yes," she answered, in a very peculiar tone; "and that is just the mischief. If I had known nothing, all might have been well."

This was very mysterious. It took me some time and trouble to make Jenny more explicit; at length she told me all.

"When we were really married," she began, "and I came home his wife, and looked at him and felt proud of him, I was happy. Oh! so happy. Perhaps you remember that, even before changing my dress, I went down the garden. I had a foolish fancy to gather some of my favourite flowers and take them with me. I thought to be alone there; but some one had given Mr. Forbes a letter on our coming in, and he had gone to the garden to read it. I saw him in the summer-house, sitting in your chair, his head flung on the table, his arms clasped above it; and I heard him groaning as if he were in great agony. I turned cold and trembled. I knew it was no physical pang that wrung those moans from him. The letter he had been reading was on the ground by him. I picked it up and stood with it in my hand, looking at him. He had not heard, and he did not heed me. I looked just at the first words; and when I had read them, I could not leave off till I had finished the whole letter. God help me! It was a love-letter, written to my husband by one who had been compelled to betray him; but who, at the eleventh hour, repented her error and asked to be forgiven! She wrote full of hope and fondness. She had suffered so much that he could not, she said, be long angry with his own Annie! Yes, she called herself his own. I was his wife; I had not been an hour married; I still wore my white dress, my veil, and my orange-wreath, and another woman wrote thus to my husband! He now roused himself and saw me. I still held the letter in my hand, and my face, no doubt, told him that I had read it; for he took it from me and walked away—both without a word. I wondered how he felt. Was he sorry the letter had not come sooner? Would he have given me up even at the foot of the altar? I know better

now—I know Mr. Forbes could not be dishonourable; but then my mind was not my own. One thing, however, was clear. He did not love me. He had wished to marry me in order to punish the ingrate, and to hurry our marriage in order to forestal hers, and show her how little he felt her faithlessness. He had taken me, poor, plain, and unattractive, that I might owe him much, and he, the rich, handsome gentleman, owe me very little. That was it, and, cousin William, it was very bitter.

"You know now why we are not, and cannot be, happy. It is because I read that letter. I am like Psyche, and, like her, I pay for my error. If I had remained ignorant, I should have been content. Mr. Forbes would have acted his part to the end, and to the end I should have thought that I had fascinated him. But my poor little pride has had a fall, and little cousin Jane has been sorely humbled. She knows, what you knew all along, that she was never loved, but merely made the instrument of an angry lover's revenge. Still, I must be just to him. I am sure he meant to make me very happy—to be generous, kind, and attentive, and perhaps, in the end, he would have liked me. Only, you see, now he cannot. I know too much. As he is in your presence, so he is in private—a perfect gentleman. I, who meant to be so good, so devoted, so dutiful even, never find a word to say to my husband. I answer when he speaks, and that is all. I am cold as a statue when he is by. I feel it, I know it, and I cannot help it: that Annie is ever between us, and she freezes me. I have never seen her; I do not know who she is, what she is like; but sometimes I lie awake at night and think, 'If he were to find me dead to-morrow, would he be very sorry; he could marry his Annie?'"

Poor little Jane! My heart ached for her, and it ached all the more that I fancied she was fond of her husband. "Jenny, Jenny," said I, with a sigh, "I will tell you why you can do nothing to win Mr. Forbes; it is because you like him."

She hid her face in her hands, and I saw her forehead, her neck even, turn crimson.

"Yes, that is it," she said at length, looking up and turning pale again. "I like him—I who reproached myself for not caring enough about him when we married—I who meant to try so hard to get that liking. I like him. He does not see it, he never will see it; but if he should, I shall be the most wretched of women. It is the thought of my indifference that reconciles him to his lot; if he knew the truth, he would find it unendurable."

"How do you know that?" I asked, much startled.

"I cannot tell you, but I know it. I nearly betrayed myself once, and I cannot forget his look of uneasiness and alarm."

"Jane, you slander your husband."

"No," she replied, quietly, "and you must not misunderstand me and wrong him. I am quiet, you know; well, I believe that Mr.

Forbes took me partly for that. 'Here is a girl who will expect no devotion, no fondness, no nonsense,' he thought, 'nothing, at least, that I cannot give her.' Suppose he finds out that I am not the woman he thought me, and that when I married I did expect to love and to be loved, will it not be misery to him to try and fulfil his part of the compact?"

Alas! that was true, and because it was true I heaved a deep sigh. At that moment the parlour door opened, and Arthur came in. At once he crept up to his young step-mother. She took him on her knee, and twining his arms around her neck, he nestled on her bosom, and thence looked at me with a pale pitiful little face that made me forgive him all his sins.

"Jane," I said, and I am not ashamed to add that my eyes were dim, "there is your hope and your link with the father."

Jane shook her head rather sadly.

"No link," she replied, "but, if possible, a cause of further division. When I came and found this poor sickly thing, my heart yearned towards it, perhaps because it suffered like myself; perhaps," she added, with a faint blush, "because it was his. I called it, and it came. I caressed it, and it fell asleep in my arms. When it was sick, I tended it; when it was peevish and fretful through pain, I bore with it; and thus, I suppose, it loved me. But, you see, it loves me too much. One who ought to be first is second now, and second far away. I am obeyed when another is not heeded; I am sought when another is left, and I am not his Annie that the preference should not be resented; not against me, indeed, not against the child, but resented as a wrong. For if there be a being passionately loved, it is this little pale creature. His mother died when he was born, and his father almost became a woman for his sake. He nursed him, he tended him, and I reap the sweet fruit of love—I, who had not the care of the tree. But I cannot help it. This is my comfort in sadness; this little warm living creature clinging to me, and I cannot give it up. When I talk to it and play with it, when I dress it, as I like to do daily, I feel almost happy. Arthur is not always cross as you have seen him, cousin William; Arthur does not always bite, for Arthur is not always in pain, poor little fellow. He has days when he is bright, and merry, and frolicsome, without mischief, just like a young kid. Eh, Arthur?"

Arthur looked up; she stooped, and their lips met in a long fond kiss. They were thus when Mr. Forbes entered the room. I saw his colour change as he perceived the child in his wife's arms, but he soon recovered his composure, came up to us cheerfully, and, bending over Jane's shoulder, asked Arthur to kiss papa. Arthur frowned, and gave papa a sulky push. Mr. Forbes tried to smile as he walked away, but the smile was forced, though a blush which followed it was real. We are none of us perfect, and I am bound to say that as Arthur pushed his father away, a saucy little look of triumph passed

through Jane's brown eyes: a look that to me, at least, said very plainly: "I am not Annie; but some one can love me, Mr. Forbes." It was this look which, whether he understood it or not, made Mr. Forbes colour like a girl.

Nothing is easier than to solicit confidence under pretence of giving advice; nothing more troublesome, to a conscientious person, than to give the proffered counsel when the confidence has been made. So, at least, I now felt, and I dreaded being alone with Jane again; but I found, to my great comfort, though not without some mortification, that Jane had spoken to get relief, not to be advised. At least, she never asked me to suggest what line of conduct she should pursue towards her husband, and I believe she even forgot that anything of the kind had been mentioned between us. I pitied her from my heart, but I saw no remedy to her sorrows. I pitied Mr. Forbes too. You see, it is one thing to marry a woman with the intention of giving and receiving affectionate regard, and it is another thing to marry a girl who takes the liberty of falling in love with you, and who feels aggrieved if you do not, or rather cannot, follow her example. What should I have done, for instance, if, marrying Jane for the sake of being comfortable with her, I had suddenly discovered that my saucy little cousin was enamoured of poor me? It has occurred to me since then, that Jane would not so have committed herself with me, but, at the time, I did not think of that. I rejoiced that I had not proposed to her, and I pitied her husband; for if Jane's misfortune was to have read the letter, his trouble was to read her heart rather too truly. Poor little simple Jane! it was like her to think that she could keep such a secret from a husband, who had not love to blind him.

I watched him without seeming to do so, and I felt sure that Mr. Forbes's grief was to see his wife's love and not be able to return it; his grief was to have married, as he thought, a sensible mercenary girl, and to find out that he was wedded to a fond and tender-hearted woman. I do not mean to say that he resented that love, or that it bored him; but he could not return it.

I was beginning to walk about with the help of a stick, when I saw Mr. Forbes go off in his chaise one morning with Arthur.

"Please to tell Jane that I am taking the child"—he said to me.

On hearing this, Arthur, who had sat quietly till then, uttered a scream of dismay, and called on his "mamma." I saw Mr. Forbes bite his lip, but he drove away all the faster, and both father and child were out of sight in a few moments. Jane had heard the cry, and now came down rather scared. On hearing the explanation I gave her, she turned very pale.

"Oh, why does he take him to Harting?" she cried, piteously; "my maid has just told me the small-pox is there. Oh, if one could only overtake him!"

That was out of the question, so I did my best to comfort Jane; but the tears stood in her eyes as she still kept sighing:

"Oh! why did he take him?"

Why, indeed? The child came home bright and well, and his father seemed quite triumphant at having kept him half a day away from his step-mother.

"And he was not at all unhappy, Jane," he said, with marked emphasis.

All day the child continued well and merry, but next morning he felt sick, and by the time his father came home at night he was ill; he had the small-pox. It was I who told Mr. Forbes. He turned dreadfully pale; he had learned in the course of the day that the epidemic was at Harting. It was there, and he had taken his child to it; he had taken him to illness, perhaps to death, just to brave and tease his poor young wife! I knew all this passed in his mind, for the first words he uttered were:

"God forgive me!"

His next remark was the question:

"Has Jane ever had it?"

"Never," I replied, gravely.

"Then she must not stay with him," he said, quickly; "she must not."

He went up; I followed him to the nursery. Jane was there bending over the little cot, with Arthur's hand in hers. Mr. Forbes went up to her; he was much agitated. He could scarcely speak.

"Jane," he said, without looking at the child, "you must not stay. I know you have never had this complaint—you must not stay."

"Would you say that, if I were his mother?" she asked.

"You have no right to risk your life," he urged. "I have had it, so has your cousin." (I am dreadfully pock-marked, reader.) "We risk nothing; you risk much."

"What?" asked Jane, and my pale sad-faced little cousin became for a while a glowing and almost a beautiful woman; "what do I risk? Life! It is not so dear, Mr. Forbes. Disfigurement! What change for the worse would that make in my lot?"

Mr. Forbes said not a word.

"I have had that child's love," continued Jane, looking back towards the cot, "and nothing, nothing, shall make me leave him!"

No more was said. Arthur moaned as he lay, and Jane sat on one side of him, and her husband on the other.

Three days they sat thus. Three days the little sufferer lingered. On the fourth, an angel called him and released him from his pain. I was present when he died. That poor peevish little fellow had become so patient and so meek in his illness, that I, too, had begun to love him. My heart smote me when I saw his eyelids flutter strangely, and his pale lips quiver, and his little face—it was neither blotched nor altered—take the strange calmness of death. Jane wept silently. Mr. Forbes was tearless, and sat look-

ing on like one turned to stone. At first he seemed incredulous, but at length he understood that it was all over. I do not think he saw me; if he did, he forgot me. He turned to his wife.

"Jane," he said.

She looked, and did not move.

"Jane, come to me."

She rose, and went and sat on the couch by his side. With a sudden moan, in which love, remorse, and pain, seemed to mingle, he drew her towards him. He laid his head on that kind bosom where his child's head had so often rested. It had been the refuge of all little Arthur's troubles, and it now received the strong man's passion of grief. Jane flung her arms around her husband's neck and mingled her tears with his, and whilst they wept together, the young and innocent dead slept on and smiled divinely, with closed eyes, at that fair world, without sorrow, passion, or pain, which it had just entered.

I softly stole away, feeling that out of the saddest grief good may come. Long after this, Jane said to me:

"Cousin William, my husband gave me his heart in that hour, and he has never taken it back again."

"And never will, little Jane; for if there be a fondly loved wife, you are that woman."

Jane had the small-pox; but her husband nursed her through it, and she recovered quickly, and was not at all disfigured. Happy Jane! I saw her the other day when I called at the Elms on my way to London. What a bright old house it looked, now that Jane was loved and happy! How proud Mr. Forbes seemed of his wife and of their only child, a beautiful boy very like him—need I say his name is Arthur? Well! Do you know, fond though she evidently was of him, I doubted if Jane loved this Arthur quite so much as she had loved the other one? I told her so.

"The first Arthur," she replied, "was the child of my sorrow; the second Arthur is the child of my happiness. Both could not be dear after the same fashion. Besides, the other Arthur loved me best, and this one prefers his father."

"And Annie?" I suggested; "what about her?"

"I neither know nor care," replied Jane, with superb indifference. "The dead Arthur makes me feel secure in the past, and with the living Arthur I can defy a dozen Annies."

Dear little Jane! She was just the same little goose as ever. It was like her to think that her hold on her husband depended on a dead or on a living child. Mr. Forbes knew better. In the fulness of his happiness, he told me the whole story about "Annie," as he drove me to the station. Of course he did not tell me who "Annie" was; but he had seen her again at a party, and he could not help saying:

"Cousin William, you cannot imagine what I felt when I compared these two women—my dear, pretty Jane" (pretty Jane! oh, love, love!), "and that cold, shallow, frivolous woman! My

darling felt me shudder as we left, and she thought I was cold. Cold! I was thinking—I might actually have married that woman!"

HORSES FOR INDIAN SERVICE.

THE Indian public are at last beginning to consider seriously the best mode of supplying the army with horses, in consequence of the supply from Persia and Arabia being cut off, and that received from Australia being of very inferior quality. It is surprising that a country like India, possessing in various parts a climate eminently adapted for breeding horses, should be entirely dependent on foreign countries for horseflesh.

There is an unaccountable prejudice existing in the minds of nearly all European residents in India—a prejudice which seems to have been handed down from time immemorial, and which is accepted and adopted by each new comer with little or no inquiry—that horse breeding in India is a delusion and a snare. The majority, when questioned on the subject, would, in all probability, be unable to give any more satisfactory reason for their opinion than that India-bred horses are "brutes." Indeed, every kicking, rearing, vicious, and unbreakable brute is at once stigmatised as a "country bred." Those that are frequently seen on the commons near villages, whose dams are cat-ham'd Tattoos, and whose sires are screaming, wall-eyed, and vicious "Belooches," certainly do not possess much to recommend them, either in shape or temper; but it would be as unjust to accept these as specimens of what India could produce, as it would be to suppose that a very bad cab-horse is a fair type of the only species of equine animal that can be produced in England. In the Madras Presidency, the government breeding-stud is understood to have been abolished in consequence of the number of under-sized horses that were produced, and not, as is often supposed, in consequence of the produce being worthless and unmanageable. Nevertheless, the generally adopted idea, that "country bred" are brutes, has been fully entertained by cavalry officers, as the following anecdote will show.

When the Marquis of Tweedale was governor and commander-in-chief of the Madras army, he informed the late General Hill, who was then superintendent of the stud department, that he had received several complaints regarding the inferiority of the animals supplied from the stud—that they were vicious and unbreakable, and that they did not last long. The general was much surprised, and requested his Excellency to be kind enough to call for returns showing the number of "stud bred" there were in each regiment, and showing the length of time each different caste of horse, Australians, Capes, Persians, Arabs, and stud bred, lasted in an efficient state. His Excellency complied, and the order went forth. Officers, when asked by their colonels how many "stud bred" they had in their troops, replied, "Oh,

only two or three brutes;" but, to their surprise, when they came to make up the required returns from official records, they found that they had a great many more stud bred than they imagined, and, moreover, that the much-abused "stud bred" were, next to Persians, the longest efficient workers; that Arabs came third in order of merit; and Capes and Australians last.

The enduring properties of the Persian horse are undoubtedly due to his phlegmatic temperament and deep-rooted objection to do more than is absolutely necessary; an exactly opposite temperament, and the habit of exerting himself to the utmost where a moderate amount of exertion would be sufficient, is the cause of the Arab failing sooner than the Persian and stud bred. The stud bred were undoubtedly wiry useful little horses, hard as nails, but perhaps a little difficult to break in. Experience has long proved that, in a tropical climate, the cross between the Arab and English blood deteriorates at least in height, and very frequently in many other essential qualities; the system adopted at the Mysore stud failed, as already said, principally from the deterioration in size. The writer has long thought that the breeding of thorough-bred English stock on hard dry food would be attended with great success, and the opinion has been considerably strengthened by reading an account of a gentleman's experience in this particular line at Aleppo, which appeared in the Sporting Magazine for March, 1864. It is a quotation from a letter received by a Scotch gentleman who had imported two Arab mares for breeding purposes.

"I have made five experiments in horses here.

"1st. Out of thorough-bred English mares by Arab stallions.

"2nd. Out of the best Arab mares by thorough-bred English horses.

"3rd. Rearing the best Arab blood on succulent forage, as in England.

"4th. Rearing thorough-bred English stock in the Desert on dry food.

"5th. Buying colts and fillies superior to those usually sold by the Arabs.

"The first experiment has led to no great results, the produce being merely handsomer than English horses, without being faster.

"The second experiment has succeeded occasionally; but, out of four, three are leggy, weak, and unfit for racing.

"The third experiment is a complete failure, excepting in increasing the size. The produce has the defects of the English horse, without having the merits of the Arab.

"The fourth experiment is *perfectly successful*, the stock, though smaller than their parents, being better able to stay a distance. The heat of the Desert, the dryness, the constant galloping (from their birth after their dams, and ridden by children from a year and a half), the she-camel's milk with which the Arabs feed their foals (and which they think imparts the camel's endurance), the oxygena-

tion of the blood by being always in the open air, the kind treatment (preventing bad temper, which impedes development), have all a great combined effect in bringing out the good qualities of a horse; a cubic inch of the tibia of a horse so reared, weighs twenty per cent more than stabled stock.

"I have now a colt out of Test by Touchstone, dam Sarella by Emilius, got by Chilton by Cowl, which I offered a few days ago in the Desert as a present to any Arab who could catch him. They tried their best, but he ran right away from them."

Of the fifth experiment, which was entirely successful, it is needless to speak, seeing that our supplies from Arabia are entirely cut off.

It has been recommended lately that a *dépôt* should be formed in Australia for the purpose of collecting horses suitable for the Indian service; a very good arrangement indeed for the fortunate man who obtains the post of superintendent, but the bad policy of wholly depending on foreign countries for our horses seems to be entirely lost sight of. If an European war were to break out, our communication with Australia and the Cape would either be entirely cut off, or would be maintained with very great danger and expense; besides which, the writer confidently affirms that Australian horses are not well adapted to the Indian climate; they suffer greatly from liver complaints, even under shelter, and are totally unfit for exposure. The immense size of the English thorough-bred gives ample room for deterioration in height without reducing below the cavalry standard, and the third or fourth generation would be a breed of horses better adapted for India than any it has ever possessed.

It will be objected that many thorough-breds annually produced in England are mere weeds. But in England, weedy mares and stallions are bred from, in the hope of their producing something that will be fast enough to win a half-mile race, with the chance of something better "turning up." Then, again, the system of running them at two years old is acknowledged by most men to be prejudicial to the chance of obtaining stouter horses. It would not be absolutely necessary for the Indian government to breed from weeds, neither would it be necessary to purchase the best racers England can produce. There are numbers of thorough-bred English horses, both stallions and mares, to be procured, who could carry twice the weight that any Arab or Australian ever imported into India, could. Many, again, look more slim and fragile than the half-bred, but their bone, sinew, and, above all, their blood, enables them to go faster, to last longer, to carry as heavy weights as, and to recover sooner from fatigue than, the half-bred. Hay and lucern can be produced in such large quantities in India, and so easily, that there would be less difficulty in rearing horses on the hard-fed system than on the other. A farm of two thousand acres, one thousand for hay, twenty acres for lucern, and the re-

mainder for grain, together with six or seven hundred acres for enclosures for the young stock to exercise in, would be amply sufficient to rear five hundred head of horses yearly. The enclosures for exercise should not be turfed. The galloping about on hard dry ground would accustom the hoof (as in the case of the Arab bred in the Desert) to the kind of soil that it would ultimately have to travel on.

CLUBS AND CLUB-MEN.

CLUBS are not now what they formerly were. Like many other things, they have grown grander and more ostentatious with the progress of civilisation and the increase of national wealth; but it may be doubted whether what they have gained in splendour they have not lost in sociability and ease. A club now, in the generality of cases, is a palace, where the soul is dazzled with gilding, and oppressed by footmen. You pace through magnificent halls, sit in saloons worthy of Versailles, and admire yourself in mirrors big enough to reflect the giant Cormoran from head to foot. The club has accordingly come to be regarded more as a piece of mingled convenience and show than as the scene of social gatherings and intellectual recreation. It is a hotel for dining at, a house for smoking in, an address for letters, a reading-room, a place for appointments, a centre of political influence; anything rather than a quiet meeting-ground for equals and familiars, where ideas may be exchanged over the supper-table or the pint of wine. A few clubs of the older fashion still remain, but they are not likely to become more numerous. In the eighteenth century—the golden age of clubs—all this was different. The Addison and Steeles, the Johnsons and Goldsmiths, the Garricks and Reynolds, had a very snug idea of clubbing. They did not suffer themselves to freeze or parch in separate groups scattered about a Great Desert of velvet-pile carpet, but gathered together in a room of moderate capacity, where the electric currents of wit could circulate through the whole body of members. A few familiar friends sitting round the same table, meeting on stated evenings, and breaking up when they liked, gives one the best idea of club life as it was a hundred years ago among the literary and artistic circles.

Clubs are as old as most other good and pleasant things. Mr. John Timbs, from whose agreeable volumes on *Club Life* in London the facts and anecdotes of this paper are derived, traces them back to a very early period. The Greeks had their symposia, the Romans their confraternities; and probably, if we were equally well acquainted with the social life of the Oriental nations of antiquity, we should find that they also formed convivial brotherhoods, and met at stated times and places for eating, drinking, and story-telling. Mention is made of a "*Court de bone Compagnie*" in England in the reign of Henry the Fourth: Oocleve, the poet,

was a member of it, and perhaps Chaucer, though, if the latter, it could only have been very shortly before his death. But we do not hear much of clubs in this country until the time of Elizabeth or James the First. We are all, however, familiarly acquainted with the famous literary association which has cast an undying halo round the name of the Mermaid Tavern. It was there that the most illustrious poets and scholars of that grand age were accustomed to meet; it was there that the "wit combats" between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson took place, of which "old Church Fuller" has given so lively an account; and it was there that, according to Beaumont, the conversation was so brilliant that the air became charged with a sort of electric influence, capable of making "the two next companies right witty, though but downright fools" before. It is to be regretted that we have not more particulars of the origin and development of the Mermaid Club. It is even somewhat doubtful whether Shakespeare was a member; and the pleasant tradition that the society was founded by Sir Walter Raleigh seems to rest on no sufficient authority. Then there was the Apollo Club, held at the Devil Tavern, in Fleet-street, of which Jonson was president, and for which he framed a Welcome in verse, inscribed in gold letters on a black board: this, together with the bust of "the boon Delphic god" placed above the door of the principal room, called "The Oracle of Apollo," may still be seen at the banking-house of the Messrs. Child, which occupies the site of the old hostelry, or very nearly so.

At both of these clubs the conversation, we may suppose, was solely literary; but in the troublous times half a century or so later, political clubs came into being. The most famous was the Rota, which was founded in 1659 as a debating society of high republican principles. It derived its name from a plan it approved, of changing a certain number of members of Parliament annually by rotation. Harrington, author of *Oceana*, who was strongly in favour of a commonwealth and of the ballot, was one of the leading intellects of this club, where he used to deliver earnest speeches in support of his views; and so was a much more famous man, to wit, John Milton. The society, as might be expected, was broken up after the Restoration in May, 1660; but, in the January of that year, Pepys was present at a debate on the government of ancient Rome. During the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, there was a secret royalist club called "The Sealed Knot," which at one time organised a general insurrection in favour of Charles Stuart; but a treacherous member, who was in Cromwell's pay as a spy, gave information, and caused the arrest of the conspirators. A story prevailed about the close of the seventeenth century, that Milton established during the Commonwealth a club called the Calves' Head Club, in ridicule of the fate of Charles the First, and that the members even continued

to meet secretly after the Restoration. An axe was hung up in the club-room, and divers grotesque ceremonials, of a treasonable and regicidal character, were gone through. It appears, however, to be very doubtful whether any such club existed in Milton's time, and it is at any rate intrinsically improbable that a man of his severe and lofty intellect would have connected himself with such ribaldry. Yet that certain observances of a similar kind did actually take place several years later, seems likely enough; for it is reported that on January 30, 1735, some wild young fellows met at a tavern in Suffolk-street, Charing-cross, called themselves the Calves' Head Club, burnt a calf's head in a bonfire in front of the house, dipped their napkins in red wine, and waved them out of the window. One gentleman, more rash than the rest, or more heated with wine, openly drank to the health of the army which dethroned the king. A mob collected in front of the house, were treated with strong beer, and for a time joined in the celebration; but subsequently, taking offence at something said or done, they attacked the house, and made so serious a riot that it was found necessary to call out the Guards. Such, at least, is the account given at the time by more than one writer; but two gentlemen who were present on the occasion—a Mr. A. Smyth and Lord Middlesex—affirm, in letters to Spence, the writer of the well-known *Anecdotes*, that the meeting was accidental, and without any reference to the anniversary of the beheading of Charles the First; that the bonfire was made in a mere drunken freak; that the toasts drunk out of the window were loyal toasts; and that an Irish priest, probably irritated at the toast of "The Protestant Succession," excited the mob to commit acts of violence. This is the last we hear of Calves' Head Clubs; but, allowing the account given by Lord Middlesex and Mr. Smyth to be correct, there seems little doubt that some such associations were really formed from time to time, as a mode of expressing political feeling, and as a sort of counter-demonstration to the absurd and violent sermons which used to be preached in the churches on the 30th of January. An old print is in existence, called "The True Effigies of the Members of the Calves' Head Club, held on the 30th of January, 1734, in Suffolk-street, in the county of Middlesex." A copy of this print is to be seen in Hone's *Every-Day Book*, vol. ii. The date, it will be observed, is that of the year before the riot; and there are two other prints of the same treasonable association, one after a drawing by Hogarth, besides several allusions in contemporary literature. In the sketch copied by Hone, we see a gentleman at the centre window with a calf's head in his hand, which he is apparently about to throw into the bonfire beneath. At his side is a gentleman dipping his napkin in wine; at another window is a man in a mask, with an axe in his hand, and some one holding up what looks like a calf's head.

Probably, popular fears exaggerated the proceedings; but it is equally probable that demonstrations of an anti-royalist character were sometimes indulged in by the young and thoughtless.

Political clubs were common in the early years of last century. The most famous were the Mug-house Clubs, which were originally nothing more than associations for ale-drinking (no other liquor being allowed) and the singing of songs. Politics were at first studiously excluded; but, on the death of Queen Anne, the question of the succession so agitated men's minds that the Mug-house gentlemen took a decided stand on the Hanoverian side, and became a formidable power. They held their meetings in various parts of the town, organised themselves into armed bodies, and made public demonstrations on every anniversary which was capable of receiving a political or religious colour. This was a species of defiance which the Jacobites were not slow in accepting, and a series of formidable riots ensued. Downright battles took place in the leading streets; the Mug-houses were more than once besieged by Tory mobs, and people were sometimes killed. The combatants on each side were, for the most part, armed with oaken staves; but other weapons were not unfrequently used. In the year 1716, the Jacobite mob, enraged by a defeat they had recently suffered at the hands of the Muggers (who seem generally to have had the best of it), attacked a famous Mug-house in Salisbury-court, Fleet-street. They were led by one Vaughan, who is described as having been "formerly a Bridewell boy;" and with shouts of "High Church and Ormond! down with the Mug-house!" they advanced against the premises. Read, the landlord, threw up a window, and, presenting a blunderbuss, vowed he would shoot the first man who should try to force his way in. Vaughan, however, pushed on, followed by the others; Read fired, and the Bridewell boy fell mortally wounded. The mob, rendered furious by this deed, burst open the door, sacked the house, and would have hung up the landlord to his own sign-post, as they threatened to do, had he not already escaped by the back door. It was now proposed to set fire to the whole street; but before this could be accomplished, the sheriffs sent to Whitehall, where a squadron of horse had been already drawn up in anticipation of some such disturbance, and the arrival of the soldiers speedily caused the dispersion of the crowd. Read was afterwards tried for murder, but found guilty of manslaughter only; and five of the rioters, who had been captured by the military, were ultimately hanged at Tyburn.

Another political club was the Kit-Kat, established about the close of the seventeenth century, in Shire-lane, Temple-bar, by thirty-nine noblemen and gentlemen attached to Whig principles. Authorities differ as to the origin of the grotesque name of this club; but it seems probable that it arose from the members meeting at the house of one Christopher Katt, a famous

maker of mutton-pies, or from the fact of the pies themselves forming a standing dish at the club suppers. The club is mentioned in No. 9 of the Spectator, and among its supporters were no less a hero than the Duke of Marlborough, no less a statesman than Sir Robert Walpole, no less a lawyer than Somers, and such wits and authors as Addison, Steele, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Garth, not to mention others of less celebrity. It is unfortunate that the name of Shire-lane has been changed during the last twenty years to Lower Serle's-place. The glories of an old city are in its memories; and, seeing that with so many of the Tatlers are associated Shire-lane (or, as it was then written, Sheer-lane), it would be pleasant, as one passes through Temple-bar, still to behold the familiar words painted up at the corner of the obscure and narrow turning round which the brilliant writers of Queen Anne's days have passed to and from their mirthful gatherings. Many of the houses of Shire-lane are, for the most part, old enough to be the identical buildings which were standing when the Whig statesmen and wits assembled at the Kit-Kat, and when "Mr. Bickerstaff" wrote lively sketches of society from his apartments there. The lane has miserably fallen in the social scale since then: wretched little workshops occupy the ground floors; dirty children welter about the gutters; the dust and soot of nearly two centuries incrust the walls and ceilings; yet this dingy defile is irradiated by a light which can never die out of English letters. A thousand pleasant thoughts of graceful humour and kindly moralising—a thousand pictures of a bright gay phase of manners, now sufficiently removed to be already acquiring the tender and freakish light of the past—are associated with the very words, "Shire-lane." A good anecdote of Garth is told in connexion with the Kit-Kat. He paid a visit to the club one night, but said he must shortly go, as he had fifteen patients to attend. Some good wine, however, being produced, Garth forgot all about his patients until reminded by Steele. Hereupon the jovial author-physician said, "It's no great matter whether I see them to-night or not; for nine of them have such bad constitutions that all the physicians in the world can't save them, and the other six have such good constitutions that all the physicians in the world can't kill them."

The Royal Society Club was, as may be supposed, originally an association of philosophers, and so, to some extent, it is still, though men of intellect generally are admitted. It arose out of some very informal meetings over which Dr. Halley, the astronomer, presided, and which used to be held on Thursday evenings at a house kept by one Reynell in Dean's-court. This was about 1731, and Reynell afterwards took the King's Arms in St. Paul's-churchyard, where Halley and his companions continued their meetings. The club was at first called "The Club of Royal Philosophers." These learned gentlemen

must have been temperate in their eating and drinking, for it was a rule that the dinners should cost only eighteenpence ahead, exclusive of liquor, and the members were not expected to order more than a pint of wine. At first, the dinners consisted simply of fish and pudding; but, on the members removing to the King's Arms, "they began to have a little meat," says a contemporary account. It would almost seem as if we were reading of a set of anchorites. Later in the century, however, we hear of more luxurious entertainments, consisting of turkey, calves' heads, tongue and udder, venison, turtle, plum-pudding, &c.; and for a long time a custom prevailed of admitting as honorary members any one who sent the club a buck or other choice delicacy—a habit hardly consistent with the dignity either of philosophers or gentlemen, and, on that ground, afterwards abolished. An anecdote is told of these learned thinkers, which shows that they were not superior to the superstitions of the vulgar and ignorant. One of them, entering the Mitre Tavern in Fleet-street, where the club then met (the same house which Dr. Johnson frequented), and finding twelve others already at table, retreated and dined by himself, in order to avert the evil consequences supposed to result from thirteen dining together—the death of one of the number within a year of the occurrence. A minute of this circumstance was said to be on record in the club papers; but Mr. Timbs affirms that "no such statement is now to be found entered," and that, "curiously enough, thirteen is a very usual number at these dinners." The philosophers, it seems, could be gallant as well as superstitious. On one occasion, a very pretty girl was seen looking out of an upper window on the opposite side of the street. The members were dining at the time, but one after another got up from the table, and went to the window to gaze at the fair watcher. The Hon. Henry Cavendish, who was noted for his eccentricity, thought his companions were looking at the moon; but when he discovered how the case stood, he turned away in contemptuous indignation, with the scornful monosyllable "Pshaw!"

The Cocoa-Tree Club, in St. James's-street, arose out of a Tory chocolate-house of Queen Anne's days. It assumed the higher form of a club in 1746; and sixteen years afterwards we find Gibbon, of the Decline and Fall, a member. Several members of Parliament and persons high in office belonged to this club, which, it used to be said, exercised a very important influence on the course of politics. In these days, members of Parliament bribe; a hundred years ago they were bribed.* The Cocoa-Tree gentlemen were not above taking their bank-notes for two or three hundred pounds each, when the Ministry, being hard-pushed, were obliged to resort to this device; and the

peace of Fontainebleau is alleged to have cost the Government twenty-five thousand pounds. Gambling also went on to a fearful extent at the Cocoa-Tree. Horace Walpole relates, in 1780, that a Mr. O'Birne, an Irishman, won a hundred thousand pounds of a young Mr. Harvey. "You can never pay me," said O'Birne. "I can," replied the young fellow; "my estate will sell for the debt." "No," said the Irishman, "I will win ten thousand—you shall throw for the odd ninety." They did, and Harvey won. At most of the fashionable clubs of the last century gaming was carried on in the most reckless manner. In the club-book of Almack's there is this note:—"Mr. Thynne, having won *only* twelve thousand guineas during the last two months, retired in disgust, March 21st, 1772." To lose twenty thousand pounds in one evening was not unusual. Generally, ten thousand pounds in specie lay on the table. A curious account is given of the way in which these desperate gamblers equipped themselves for the sport. They took off their embroidered coats, put on frieze garments, protected their lace ruffles with pieces of leather, shaded their eyes with broad-brimmed straw hats adorned with flowers and ribbons, and wore masks "to conceal their emotions"! There is something singularly dramatic, and even terrible, in that last provision—something suggestive of the white cap at executions. Behind those masks, what fever of suspense, what ferocity of exultation, what gloom of despair, must oftentimes have lurked! That suicide was not an unfrequent result of such high play can hardly be wondered at. Lord Mountford, a member of White's, where the gambling was fearful, got so involved that he determined to ask for a Government appointment; failing which, he would take his own life. He did fail, and, after asking several persons what was the easiest mode of dying, invited some friends to dinner on New Year's-day, and the evening before supped at White's, where he played at whist until one o'clock in the morning. A fellow-member drank to him a happy new year; "he clapped his hand strangely to his eyes." In the morning he sent for a lawyer and three witnesses, made his will with great deliberation, and then asked the lawyer if it would stand good, though a man were to shoot himself? The answer being Yes, he said, "Pray stay while I step into the next room," and, retiring, shot himself dead. According to Walpole, three brothers, members of White's, contracted a debt of seventy thousand pounds, while Lord Foley's two sons borrowed money so enormously that the interest alone amounted to eighteen thousand pounds a year. The same vivacious chronicler of the manners of his time gives an almost incredible account of Fox's love of play and dissipation. In the debate on the Thirty-nine Articles, February 6th, 1772, he spoke very differently; and Walpole says this was not surprising under the circumstances. "He had sat up playing at hazard at Almack's from Tuesday

* The Conductor of this Journal believes the briber to be, in most cases, quite ready to be bribed.

evening, the 4th, till five in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 5th. An hour before, he had recovered twelve thousand pounds that he had lost, and by dinner, which was at five o'clock, he had ended, losing eleven thousand pounds. On the Thursday he spoke in the above debate; went to dinner at past eleven at night; from thence to White's, where he drank till seven the next morning; thence to Almack's, where he won six thousand pounds; and, between three and four in the afternoon, he set out for Newmarket. His brother Stephen lost eleven thousand pounds two nights after, and Charles ten thousand pounds more on the 13th; so that, in three nights, the three brothers, the eldest not twenty-five, lost thirty-two thousand pounds." Captain Gronow relates that, many years ago, Lord Robert Spencer and General Fitzpatrick were allowed to keep a faro-bank at Brookes's, and that the former bagged, as his share of the proceeds, one hundred thousand pounds; after which he never again gambled. George Harley Drummond, the banker, only played once in his life, when he lost twenty thousand pounds to Brummel, and was obliged to retire from the banking-house. In the first half of the eighteenth century, ladies of title kept gambling-houses. An entry in the journals of the House of Lords, dated the 29th of April, 1745, shows that Ladies Mordington and Cassilis claimed privilege of peerage in resisting certain peace-officers while doing their duty "in suppressing the public gaming-houses kept by the said ladies;" but the claim was not allowed.

Betting was formerly indulged in at the clubs with as much frantic zest as gambling; anything served as an excuse, and sometimes the occasions of the bets were so shocking that men of the least decency would have shrunk from associating them with any form of pleasure. A man dropped down at the door of White's, and was carried into the house: immediately the betting harpies were staking large sums on the question whether he was dead or not; and when it was proposed to bleed him, those who had taken odds that life was extinct, protested against such a course, on the ground that it would affect the fairness of the bet. Bad as this was, there was a worse case, for which Walpole is again the authority. If true—though one would fain believe it an invention—it is sufficient to leave a stain of murder on the very name of White's. A youth betted fifteen hundred pounds that a man could live twelve hours under water. He accordingly hired some poor wretch, probably in as desperate a plight as the assassins in Macbeth, and sank him in a ship. Both ship and man disappeared, and were never heard of more. Walpole adds that these miscreants actually proposed to make the attempt a second time. It is a singular fact, that the Lord Mountford whose suicide we have just related, betted Sir John Bland that Beau Nash would outlive Colley Cibber, and that both the persons betted on survived the bettors. Bland, as well as Mountford,

died by his own act. White's used sometimes to be honoured by the company of highwaymen—Hogarth shows us one in the gambling-scene of the *Rake's Progress*; but the worst of them could not have been greater scoundrels than some of these betting and gambling gentlemen.

One of the most famous convivial associations of the last century and of this, is the Beef Steak Society. We read of a Steak Club in the *Spectator*. Steele, in No. 338 (April 21st, 1712), speaks in terms of the greatest affection of Dick Eastcourt, the providore of the club; and in No. 468, bearing date August 27th, 1712, records his death in a very touching manner. This club, however, was not the same as the famous society established a few years afterwards, and still surviving, though the latter may, perhaps, have been in some measure suggested by the former. The "Society" (for the members disdain to be considered a club) originated, as is well known, in Rich, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, cooking and eating his beefsteak in the presence of a distinguished visitor. The peer (Lord Peterborough) was so charmed with the odour of the simple and masculine fare that he begged to be allowed to join; a further supply of steak was sent for, and a few bottles of wine from a neighbouring tavern gave a zest to the feast. On going away at rather a late hour, the old earl proposed to renew the meeting. On the following Saturday, Peterborough arrived with three or four friends, "men of wit and pleasure about town;" and so jovial was the meeting that it was proposed to form a Saturday club, to assemble in Rich's room, and the fare to be restricted to beef-steaks, port wine, and punch. The "Steaks" soon became fashionable, and the greatest lords, as well as the most intellectual men, were ambitious of belonging to such an illustrious association. The meetings were at first held in a room over Covent Garden Theatre; but when the house was burnt down in 1808, the members assembled for a time at the Bedford, and then in apartments over the English Opera House, now the Lyceum Theatre. Here, again, they were burnt out; but, strange to say, the original gridiron of the society (according to some, Rich's own gridiron) was saved from both fires, and now occupies the centre of the ceiling in the dining-room of the Lyceum—a dining-room, according to Mr. Peter Cunningham, beautifully fitted up with old English oak, "ornamented with gridirons as thick as Henry the Seventh's Chapel with the portenulls of the founder." Churchill and Wilkes, in the last century, were members of the Steak Society; but the former made himself so disagreeable, that, becoming unpopular, he resigned to avoid expulsion, and the latter also fell into disgrace in re the *Essay on Woman*. George the Fourth was one of the Steaks when Prince of Wales, having been elected in 1785; and various dukes, royal and not royal, have felt proud of presiding in the chair. Very naturally, considering its origin, "the Sublime Society," as it is sometimes

called, has enrolled many actors in its lists, and in the club-books occurs the entry—"J. Kemble expelled for his mode of conduct." He had probably been giving himself pompous airs. His predecessor, Garrick, being a more genial man, was very much liked; and one night, when he had to play *Ranger* at Drury Lane, of which he was then manager, he stayed so late with his brother Steaks that he kept the stage waiting. He was sent for, and came in hot and breathless. "I think, David," said Ford, one of the patentees, "considering the stake you and I have in this house, you might pay more attention to the business." "True, my good friend," replied Garrick; "but I was thinking of my steak in the other house." Another good thing was said by Garrick at one of the club dinners. He had remarked that, in order to prevent irregularities at the theatre, he always made a point of ticketing and labelling every play that was to be returned, so that it might be found in a moment. "A fig for your hypocrisy!" exclaimed Murphy across the table. "You know, David, you mislaid my tragedy two months ago, and I make no doubt you have lost it." "Yes," replied Garrick; "but you forget, you ungrateful dog, that I offered you more than its value, for you might have had two manuscript farces in its stead." We ought not to dismiss the Steaks without mentioning old Captain Charles Morris, the bard of the club, who wrote indifferent poetry (called by courtesy Anacreontic), brewed the finest of punch, made himself universally beloved for his good nature and joyous spirits, and died in 1838, at the patriarchal age of ninety-two.

Perhaps the most conspicuous figure of last century in connexion with clubs was that of Dr. Johnson. He founded the Ivy Lane Club, the Essex Head Club, and the Literary Club—the last-named in conjunction with Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Literary Club is on many accounts the most famous association of the kind in modern London. It still goes on, though under the changed name of the Johnson Club; but it has become so exclusive in its composition that it no longer answers the purposes for which it was originally designed. It commenced in September, 1764; and in the same month, the year before last, the centenary of the club was celebrated by a dinner at the Clarendon Hotel, where the members now meet—a dinner at which the venerable Lord Brougham was present. The meetings were originally held at the Turk's Head in Gerard-street, but several migrations took place in successive years, and for a long while the sittings were at the Thatched House, St. James's-street. When we recollect that in its early days this club consisted of Johnson himself, Reynolds, Burke, Gibbon, Goldsmith, Garrick, Boswell, George Colman the Elder, Sir William Jones, and others of the literary circles of that brilliant time, we must ac-

knowledge that the Literary Club occupied high ground indeed. Johnson was so resolved to maintain a lofty standard, that he black-balled, or threatened to black-ball, Garrick, who for some years was excluded, to his great mortification; but he was admitted at last. "Sir," said Johnson to Thrale, "I love my little David dearly—better than all or any of his flatterers do; but surely one ought to sit in a society like ours,

Unelbow'd by a gamester, pimp, or player."

It was an illiberal, a foolish, and an unkind remark; akin to the testy exclamation, applied to the same individual, "Pooh! Punch has no feelings!" But it may have been provoked by an inconsiderate speech of Garrick's to Sir Joshua Reynolds with respect to the Literary Club. "I like it much," he is reported to have said; "I think I shall be of you." "He'll be of us!" exclaimed Johnson, very indignantly, when this was reported to him. "How does he know we will *permit* him? The first duke in England has no right to hold such language." The last time Johnson dined at the Literary Club, which was only a short time before his death in 1784, one of the company was Lord Palmerston, father of the man who only a year ago was Prime Minister of this country. It was in the October of that very year that the late Premier was born.

There have been various clubs which, arising out of some whimsical feeling, have kept their place in club history for their oddity alone. Thus we read in the *Spectator* of a club of Uglies, a club of Dwarfs, a club of Tall Men, a club of Fat Men, a club of One-eyed Men, and an Everlasting Club, the rule of which was that the members who were at any time sitting were on no account to rise until they were relieved by another set, so that, by a judicious apportionment of the four-and-twenty hours, the club was perpetually in session. It is difficult to say, however, to what extent the account given of these clubs is fictitious and jocular, and how far it may be relied on as truthful. But there was really a club called "The Eccentrics" in the earlier years of the present century, and it boasted some of the most brilliant names in literature and statesmanship. The great modern clubs are, as we have said, scarcely "clubbable" in their character. But the associations of which Douglas Jerrold was the leading spirit—the Mulberry Club, the Museum Club, and some others—were quite after the fashion of the Johnsonian period; and since 1831 the Garrick has drawn together a large number of authors, actors, painters, and persons interested in the arts and amenities of civilised life.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VIII. GLAMOUR.

WHEN George Dallas had dined, he left the coffee-room, and retired to the bedroom which he had ordered, and which looked refreshingly clean and comfortable, when mentally contrasted with the dingy quarters on which he had turned his back in the morning. It was yet early in the evening, but he was tired; tired by the excitement and the various emotions of the day, and also by the long hours passed in the fresh balmy country air, which had a strange soporific effect on a man whose lungs and limbs were of the town, towny. The evening air was still a little sharp, and George assented readily to the waiter's proposition, made when he perceived that no more orders for drink were to be elicited from the silent and preoccupied young man, that "a bit of fire" should be kindled in his room. Over that "bit of fire" he sat long, his arms folded on his breast, his head bent, his brow lowering, his eyes fixed on the glowing embers. Was he looking at faces in the fire—his parents' faces, the faces of friends, whom he had treated as enemies, of enemies whom he had taken for friends? Were reproachful eyes looking at him from out the past; were threatening glances in the present flashed upon him? He sat there, black and moody, a long while, but at length his fixed gaze relaxed, the muscles of his mouth softened, broke into a slow smile, and a light came into his dull gloomy eyes. Then he rose, took his pocket-book from his breast-pocket, made some memoranda at the back of the sketch taken that day in Sir Thomas Boldero's park, put back the book, and, once more settling himself near the fire, lighted his pipe and began to smoke.

The musing look remained upon his face, but it was no longer painful, and, as he smoked, he fell to building castles in the air, as baseless, maybe, as the vapour which curled in fantastic wreaths about his face, but tenanted by hope, and inspired by higher and better resolves than had animated George Dallas for many a day. The twin angels, love and gratitude, were near him; invisibly their soft white wings were fluttering about him, refreshing the jaded heart

and the stained brow. His mother, and the girl whom he had that day seen for the second time, and recognised with feelings full of a bitter and evil impulse at first, but who had soon exercised over him a nameless fascination full of a pure and thrilling delight, such as no pleasure of all his sin-stained life had ever previously brought him; of these two he was thinking. If George Dallas could have seen his mother at the moment, when he, having laid his exhausted pipe upon the little wooden chimneypiece, and hastily undressed, lay down in his bed, with his hands clasped over the top of his head, in his favourite attitude when he had anything particular to think of, he would have found her not only thinking but talking of him. Mr. Carruthers was absent, so was Clare; she had the grand stately house all to herself, and she improved the occasion by having tea in her dressing-room, having dismissed her maid, affianced to a thriving miller in the village, to a tête-à-tête with her lover, and summoning her trusty friend Mrs. Brookes to a confidential conference with her. The two women had no greater pleasure or pain in their lives than talking of George. There had been many seasons before and since her second marriage when Mrs. Carruthers had been obliged to abstain from mentioning him, so keen and terrible was her suffering on his account, and at such seasons Ellen Brookes had suffered keenly too, though she had only vaguely known wherefore, and had always waited until the thickest and darkest of the cloud had passed, and her mistress had once more summoned courage to broach the subject never absent from the mind of either.

There was no reticence on this occasion; the mother had taken a dangerous step, and one whose necessity she indeed deeply deplored, but she had gotten over the first great effort and the apprehension connected with it, and now she thought only of her son, she dwelt only upon the hope, the confidence, the instinctive belief within her, that this was really the turning-point, that her prayers had been heard, that the rock of a hard and stubborn heart had been struck and had yielded, that her son would turn from the old evil paths, would consider his ways and be wise for the future. So she sat and talked to the humble friend who knew her and loved her better than any one else in the world knew or loved her, and when she at length dismissed her and lay down to rest there

was more peace at her heart than had dwelt there for a long time past.

So one of the women of whom the prodigal son had thought gently and gratefully that night, was thinking of him with love that no unworthiness could kill or lessen, with hope which no experience could exhaust. And the other? Well, the other was playing and singing to her uncle and aunt in the green drawing-room at the Sycamores, and if she had said little to Sir Thomas and Lady Boldero concerning the young artist who was so delighted with the picture-gallery, and who had despaired of doing justice to the grand old trees in the park, it is presumable that, like the parrot of old renown, she thought the more.

George Dallas slept well that night in the little country inn, and awoke to a pleasant consciousness of rest, leisure, and expectation. As he dressed himself slowly, listening to the queer mixture of town and country sounds which arose inside and outside the house, he took up a similar train of thought to that in which sleep had interrupted him on the previous night, and began to form resolutions and to dream dreams. After he had breakfasted, and perused all the daily intelligence which found its way to Amherst, where the population were not remarkably eager for general information, and the Illustrated London News was represented by one copy, taken in by the clergyman's wife, and circulated among her special friends and favourites, he went out, and once more took the direction of the Sycamores.

Should he go into the park, he asked himself, or would that be too intrusive a proceeding? Sir Thomas, on his fair niece's showing, was evidently an elderly gentleman of kindly impulses, and who could say but that he might send a message to Mr. Page, the landlord, inviting him to inform the stranger within his gates that he might have another look at the picture-gallery at the Sycamores? Was this a very wild idea? He did not know. It seemed to him as likely as not that a jolly kindly man, disposed to let his fellow-creatures enjoy a taste of the very abundant good things which providence had lavished on himself, might do a thing of the kind. A pompous, purse-proud, egotistical old fellow, who would regard every man unpossessed of landed property as a wretched creature, beneath his notice in all respects, except that of being made to admire and envy him as deeply as possible, might also think of sending such an invitation, but George Dallas felt quite sure Sir Thomas Boldero was not a man of that description. Suppose such a message should come? He had not given any name at the inn; he wished now he had done so; he would only take a short walk, and return to correct the inadvertence. At so early an hour there would be no likelihood of his seeing Miss Carruthers. It was in the afternoon she had ridden out yesterday, perhaps she would do the same to-day. At all events, he would return to the Sycamores on the chance, at the same hour as that at which he had seen her yesterday, and try his luck.

The road on which he was walking was one of the beautiful roads common in the scenery of England, a road which dipped and undulated, and wound about and about, making the most of the natural features of the landscape without any real sacrifice of the public convenience, a road shadowed frequently by tall stately trees, and along one side of which the low park paling, with a broad belt of plantation beyond, which formed the boundary of the Sycamores, stretched for three miles. On the other side, a well-kept raised pathway ran alongside a hedge, never wanting in the successive beauties of wild flowers and "tangle," and which furnished shelter to numerous birds. The day was bright and cheerful, and a light breeze was stirring the budding branches and lending a sense of exhilaration to the young man who so rarely looked on the fair face of nature, and who had unhappily had all his purer tastes and sympathies so early deadened. They revived under the influence of the scene and the softening effect of the adventure which had befallen him the day before. He stopped opposite the oaken gates, which had lain open yesterday, but were closed to-day, and he rambled on, further away from the town, and crossing the road, took his way along the park paling, where the fragrant odour from the shrubberies added a fresh pleasure to his walk.

He had passed a bend of the road which swept away from the large gates of the park, and was peering in at the mossy tufts, studded with violets and bluebells clustering round the stems of the young trees in the plantation, when his eyes lighted on a small gate, a kind of wicket in the paling, imperfectly secured by a very loose latch, and from which a straight narrow path, bordered with trimly-kept rows of ground ivy, led into a broader road dividing the plantation from the park.

"A side entrance, of course," said Dallas to himself, and then, looking across the road, he saw that just opposite the little gate there was a wooden stile, by which a path through the fields, leading, no doubt, into the town of Amherst, could be attained from the raised foot-path.

"I suppose the land on both sides belongs to Sir Thomas," thought Dallas, and as he made a momentary pause, a large black Newfoundland dog, carrying a basket in his mouth, came down the narrow path, bumped himself against the loosely fastened gate, swung it open, and stopped in the aperture, with a droll air of having done something particularly clever. Dallas looked admiringly at the beautiful creature, who was young, awkward, and supremely happy, and the next instant he heard a voice speaking from the top of the straight walk.

"Here, Cæsar," it said; "come here, sir; who told you I was going that way?"

Cæsar tossed up his head, somewhat to the detriment of the basket, and lolloped about with his big black legs, but did not retrace his steps, and the next moment Miss Carruthers appeared. A few yards only divided her from

George, who stood outside the gate, his face turned full towards her as she came down the path, and who promptly took off his hat. She returned his salutation with embarrassment, but with undisguisable pleasure, and blushed most becomingly.

"I suppose I ought to walk on and leave her; but I won't," said George to himself, in the momentary silence which followed their mutual salutation, and then, in a kind of desperation, he said:

"I am fortunate to meet you again, by a lucky accident, Miss Carruthers. You are out earlier to-day, and this is Cæsar's turn."

He patted the shiny black head of the Newfoundland, who still obstructed the entrance to the path, as he spoke, and Cæsar received the attention tolerably graciously.

"Yes, I generally walk early, and ride in the afternoon."

"Escorted by your dumb friends only," said George, in a tone not quite of interrogation. Miss Carruthers blushed again, as she replied:

"Yes, my horse and my dog are my companions generally. My aunt never walks, and Sir Thomas never rides. Were you going into the park again, Mr. Ward?"

By this time Cæsar had run out into the road, and was in a state of impatient perplexity, and evidently much inconvenienced by the basket, which he was too well trained to drop, but shook disconsolately as he glanced reproachfully at Clare, wondering how much longer she meant to keep him waiting.

"No, Miss Carruthers, I was merely walking past the Sycamores, and recalling yesterday's pleasure—half gladly, half sadly, as I fancy we recal all pleasures."

"I—I told my uncle of your visit yesterday, and he said he was sorry to have missed you, and hoped you would see as much of the park as you liked. Did—did you finish your sketch, Mr. Ward? Oh, that horrid Cæsar, he will have the handle off my basket. Just see how he is knocking it against the stile."

She came hurriedly through the open gateway into the road, George following her.

"May I take it from him?" he said.

"Oh, pray do; there now, he is over the stile, and running through the field."

George rushed away in pursuit of Cæsar, triumphant in his success in thus terminating a period of inaction for which he saw no reasonable excuse. Miss Carruthers mounted the stile in a more leisurely fashion, turned into the footpath which led through the field, and in a few moments met George returning, her basket in his hand, and Cæsar slouching along beside him, sulky and discontented.

She thanked George, told him she was going nearly as far as Amherst by the "short cut," which lay through her uncle's land, and the two young people in another minute found themselves walking side by side, as if such an arrangement were quite a matter of course, to which Mrs. Grundy could not possibly make any objection. Of course, it was highly imprudent, not to say improper, and one of the

two was perfectly conscious alike of the imprudence and the impropriety; perfectly conscious, also, that both were increased by the fact that he was George Dallas, and the young lady was Clare Carruthers, the niece of his step-father, the girl, mainly, on whose account he had been shut out from the house called by courtesy his mother's. As for Clare Carruthers, she knew little or nothing of life and the world of observances and rules of behaviour. Sheltered from the touch, from the breath, from the very knowledge of ill, the girl had always been free with a frank innocent freedom, happy with a guileless happiness, and as unsophisticated as any girl could well be in this wide-awake realistic nineteenth century. She was highly imaginative, emphatically of the romantic temperament, and, in short, a Lydia Languish without the caricature. Her notions of literary men, artists, and the like, were derived from their works; and as the little glimpse which she had as yet had of society (she had only "come out" at the ball at Poynings in February) had not enabled her to correct her ideas by comparison with reality, she cherished her illusions with ardour proportioned to their fallaciousness. The young men of her acquaintance were of either of two species: sons of country gentlemen, with means and inclination to devote themselves to the kind of life their fathers led, or military magnificoes, of whom Clare, contrary to the fashion of young ladies in general, entertained a mean and contemptuous opinion. When Captain Marsh and Captain Clitheroe were home "on leave," they found it convenient and agreeable to pass a good deal of their leisure at Poynings; and as they happened to be ninnies of the first magnitude, whose insignificance in every sense worth mention was only equalled by their conceit, Miss Carruthers had conceived a prejudice against military men in general, founded upon her dislike of the two specimens with whom she was most familiar. Clergymen are not uncommonly heroes in the imagination of young girls, but the most determined curate-worshipper could not have invested the clergymen who cured the souls in and about Amherst with heroic qualities. They were three in number. One was fat, bald, and devoted to antiquarianism and port wine. Another was thin, pock-marked, ill-tempered, deaf, and a flute-player. The third was a magistrate, a fox-hunter, and a despiser of woman-kind. In conclusion, all three were married, and Miss Carruthers was so unsophisticated, that, if they had been all three as handsome and irresistible as Adonis, she would never have thought of them in the way of mundane admiration, such being the case. So Clare's imagination had no home pasture in which to feed, and roamed far afield.

It had taken its hue from her tastes, which were strongly pronounced, in the direction of literature. Clare had received a "good education;" that is to say, she had been placed by a fashionable mother under the care of a fashionable governess, who had superintended fashionable masters while they imparted a knowledge

of music, drawing, dancing, and a couple of modern languages to her pretty, docile, intelligent pupil. The more solid branches of instruction Clare had climbed under Miss Pettigrew's personal care, and had "done credit" to her instructress, as the phrase goes. But the upshot of it all was, that she had very little sound knowledge, and that the real educational process had commenced for her with the termination of Miss Pettigrew's reign, and had received considerable impetus when Clare had been transferred—on the not particularly lamented decease of the fashionable mother, who was Sir Thomas Boldero's sister, and remarkably unlike that hearty and unworldly country gentleman,—to Poynings and the guardianship of Mr. Carruthers. Then the girl began to read after her own fancy indeed, unguided and uncontrolled, but in an omnivorous fashion; and as she was full of feeling, fancy, and enthusiasm, her reading ran a good deal in the poetical, romantic, and imaginative line. Novels she devoured, and she was of course a devotee of Tennyson and Longfellow, saying of the latter, as her highest idea of praise, that she could hardly believe him to be an American, or a dweller in that odious vulgar country, and wondering why Mrs. Carruthers seemed a little annoyed by the observation. She read history, too, provided it was picturesquely written, and books of travel, exploration, and adventure she delighted in. Periodical literature she was specially addicted to, and it was rather a pleasant little vanity of Clare to "keep up with" all the serial stories—not confusing the characters or the incidents, no matter how numerous they were, and to know the tables of contents of all the magazines and reviews thoroughly. She had so much access to books that, as far as a lady's possible requirements could go, it might be said, without exaggeration, to be unlimited. Not only did the Sycamores boast a fine library, kept up with the utmost care and attention by Sir Thomas Boldero, and of which she had the freedom, but Poynings was also very respectably endowed in a similar respect, and Mrs. Carruthers, as persistent a reader as Clare, if less discursive, subscribed largely to Mudie's. Croquet had not yet assumed its sovereign sway over English young-persondom, and none but ponderous and formal hospitalities prevailed at Poynings, so that Clare had ample leisure to bestow upon her books, her pets, and her flowers. She was so surrounded with luxury and comfort, that it was not wonderful she should invest opposite conditions of existence with irresistible charms, and her habitual associates were so common-place, so prosperous and conventional, that her aspirations for opportunities of hero-worship naturally directed themselves towards oppressed worth, unappreciated genius, and fiery hearts struggling manfully with adverse fate. "The red planet Mars" was a great favourite with her, and to suffer and be strong a much finer idea to her mind than not to suffer and to have no particular occasion for strength. She knew little of the realities of life, having never had a deeper grief than that caused by the death of

her mother, and she was in the habit of reproaching herself very bitterly with the superficiality and the insufficiency of the sorrow she had experienced on that occasion, and therefore mild and merciful judges would have pitied and excused her errors of judgment, her impulsive departure from conventional rules. Mild and merciful judges are not plentiful commodities, however, and Mrs. Grundy would doubtless have had a great deal to say, and a very fair pretext for saying it, had she seen Miss Carruthers strolling through the fields which lay between the Sycamores and Amherst, in deep and undisguisedly delighted conversation with a strange young man, who was apparently absorbed in the pleasure of talking to and listening to her, while Cæsar trotted now by the side of the one, anon of the other, with serene and friendly complacency. Mrs. Grundy was, however, not destined to know anything about the "very suspicious" circumstance for the present. And George Dallas and Clare Carruthers, with the unscrupulous yielding to the impulse of the moment, which affords youth such splendid opportunities for getting into scrapes, from which the utmost efforts of their elders are powerless to extract them, walked and talked and improved the shining hours into a familiar acquaintance, which the girl would have called friendship, but which the young man felt, only too surely, was love at first sight. He had mocked at such an idea, had denied its existence, had derided it with tongue and pen, but here it was, facing him now, delivering to him a silent challenge to deny, dispute, or mock at it any more.

A faint suspicion that the beautiful girl whom he had seen yesterday for the second time meant something in his life, which no woman had ever meant before, had hung about him since he had left the Sycamores after their first interview; but now, as he walked beside her, he felt that he had entered the enchanted land, that he had passed away from old things, and the chain of his old life had fallen from him. For weal or woe, present with her or absent from her, he knew he loved this girl, the one girl whom it was absolutely forbidden to him to love.

They had talked common-places at first, though each was conscious that the flurried earnestness of the other's manner was an absurd commentary upon the ordinary style of their conversation. George had asked, and Clare had implied, no permission for him to accompany her on her walk; he had quietly taken it for granted, and she had as quietly acquiesced, and it so happened that they did not meet a single person to stare at the tall, gaunt-looking, but handsome stranger walking with Miss Carruthers, to wonder who he "mought a bin," and proceed to impart his curiosity to the servants at the Sycamores, or the gossip at the alehouse.

"This path is not much used," said George.

"No, very little indeed," replied Clare. "You see it does not lead directly anywhere but to the Sycamores and so the farming people, my uncle's servants, and tradespeople,

back and forward to the park, chiefly use it. I often come this way, and do not meet a soul."

"Are you going into the town?"

"Not all the way: just to the turnpike on the Poynings road. Do you know Mr. Carruthers's place, Mr. Ward?"

George felt rather uncomfortable as he answered in the negative, though it was such a small matter, and the false statement did not harm anybody. He had told a tolerable number of lies in the course of his life, but he shrank with keen and unaccustomed pain from making this girl, whose golden brown eyes looked at him so frankly, whose sweet face beamed on him so innocently, a false answer.

"I am going to the cottage on the roadside, just below the turnpike," Clare continued; "an old servant of my aunt lives there, and I have a message from her. I often go to see her, not so much from kindness, I'm afraid, as because I hate to walk outside the park without an object."

"And you don't mind riding without an escort any more than you do walking without one," said George, not in the tone of a question, but in that of a simple remark. Clare looked at him with some surprise; he met the look with a meaning smile.

"You dislike the attendance of a groom, Miss Carruthers, and never admit it except in case of necessity. You are surprised, I see: you will be still more surprised when I tell you I learned this, not from seeing you ride alone in the park—there is nothing unusual in that, especially when you are on such good terms with your horse—but from your own lips."

"From my own lips, what can you possibly mean, Mr. Ward? I never saw you until yesterday, and I know I never mentioned the subject then."

The young man drew imperceptibly nearer to her, on the narrow path where they were walking, and as he spoke the following sentences, he took from his breast-pocket a little note-case, which he held in his left hand, at which she glanced curiously once or twice.

"You saw me, for the first time yesterday, Miss Carruthers, but I had seen you before. I had seen you the centre of a brilliant society, the pride and belle of a ball-room where I had no place."

"Now," thought George, "if she only goes home and tells my mother all this, it will be a nice business. Never mind, I can't help it," and he went on impetuously. The girl made no remark, but she looked at him with growing astonishment. "You talked to a gentleman happier than I—for he was with you—of your daily rides, and I heard all you said. Forgive me, the first tone of your voice told me it was but a light and trivial conversation, or I would not have listened to it." (George is not certain that he is telling the truth here, but she is convinced of it; for is he not an author, an artist, a hero?) "I even heard the gentleman's name with whom you were talking, and just before you passed out of my hearing you unconsciously gave me *this*."

He opened the note-book, took out a folded slip of paper, opened that, too, and held towards Clare, but without giving it into her hand, a slip of myrtle.

"I gave you that, Mr. Ward!" she exclaimed. "I—when—where—how? What do you mean? I remember no such conversation as you describe; I don't remember anything about a ball or a piece of myrtle. When and where was it? I have been out so little in London."

Now George had said nothing about London, but opportunely remembering that he could not explain the circumstances he had rather rashly mentioned, and that, unexplained, they might lead her to the conclusion that the part he had played on the mysterious occasion in question had been that of a burglar, he adroitly availed himself of her error. True, on the other hand, she might very possibly think that the only part which a spectator at a ball in London, who was not a partaker in its festivities, could have played must have been that of a waiter, which was not a pleasant suggestion; but somehow he felt no apprehension on that score. The girl went on eagerly questioning him, but he only smiled, very sweetly and slowly, as he carefully replaced the withered twig in the note-book, and the note-book in his pocket.

"I cannot answer your questions, Miss Carruthers; *this is my secret*—a cherished one, I assure you. The time may come, though the probability is very dim and distant just now, when I shall tell you when, and where, and how I saw you first; and if ever that time should come," he stopped, cleared his voice, and went on, "things will be so different with me that I shall have nothing to be ashamed or afraid of."

"Ashamed of, Mr. Ward?" said Clare, in a sweet soft tone of deprecating wonder. All her curiosity had been banished by the trouble and sadness of his manner, and profound interest and sympathy had taken its place.

"You think I ought not to use that word; I thank you for the gentle judgment," said George, his manner indescribably softened and deepened; "but if ever I am in a position to tell you—but why do I talk such nonsense? I am only a waif, a stray, thrown for a moment in your path, to be swept from it the next and forgotten."

This was dangerous ground, and they both felt it. A chance meeting, a brief association which perhaps never ought to have been; and here was this girl, well brought up, in the strictest sense of the term, yielding to the dangerous charm of the stranger's society, and feeling her heart die within her as his words showed the prospect before her. Her complexion died too, for Clare's was a tall-tale face, on which emotion had irresistible power. George saw the sudden paleness, and she knew he saw it.

"I—I hope not," she said, rather incoherently. "I—I think not. You are an artist and an author, you know." (How ashamed George felt, how abashed in the presence of this self-deluding innocence of hers!) "And I, as well as all the world, shall hear of you."

"You, as well as all the world," he repeated, in a dreamy tone. "Well, perhaps so. I will try to think so, and to hope it will be—"

He stopped; the gentleman's nature in him still existing, still ready at call, notwithstanding his degradation, withheld him from presuming on the position in which he found himself, and in which the girl's innocent impulsiveness had placed her. To him, with his knowledge of who she was, and who he was, with the curious relation of severance which existed between them, the sort of intimacy which had sprung up, had not so much strangeness as it externally exhibited, and he had to remind himself that she did not share that knowledge, and therefore stood on a different level to his, in the matter. He determined to get off the dangerous ground, and there was a convincing proof in that determination that the tide had turned for the young man, that he had indeed resolved upon the better way. His revenge upon his step-father lay ready to his hand; the unconscious girl made it plain to him that he had excited a strange and strong interest in her. It was not a bad initiation of the prodigal's project of reform that he renounced that revenge, and turned away from the temptation to improve his chance advantage into the establishment of an avowed mutual interest. This step he took by saying, gaily, "Then I have your permission to send you my first work, Miss Carruthers, and you promise it a place in that grand old library I had a glimpse of yesterday?"

A little shade of something like disappointment crossed Clare's sunny face. The sudden transition in his tone jarred with her feelings of curiosity, romance, and flattered vanity. For Clare had her meed of that quality, like other women and men, and had never had it so pleasantly gratified as on the present occasion. But she had too much good breeding to be pertinaacious on any subject, and too much delicacy of perception to fail in taking the hint which the alteration in George's manner conveyed. So there was no further allusion to the sprig of myrtle or to the future probability of a disclosure; but the two walked on together, and talked of books, pictures, and the toils and triumphs of a literary life (George, to do him justice, not affecting a larger share in them than was really his), until they neared Miss Carruthers's destination. The footpath which they had followed had led them by a gentle rise in the ground to the brow of a little hill, similar to that from which George had seen his mother's carriage approach Amherst on the preceding day, but from the opposite end of the town. Immediately under the brow of this hill, and approached by the path, which inclined towards its trim green gate, stood a neat small cottage, in a square bit of garden, turning its red-brick vine-covered side to the road beneath. When George saw this little dwelling, he knew his brief spell of enjoyment was over.

"That is the cottage," said Clare, and he had the consolation of observing that there was no particular elation in her voice or in her face. "Sir Thomas built it for its present tenant."

"Shall you be going back to the Sycamores alone, Miss Carruthers?" asked George, in the most utterly irrelevant manner. He had a wild notion of asking leave to wait for her, and escort her home. Again Clare blushed as she replied hurriedly:

"No, I shall not. My aunt is to pick me up here in the carriage, on her way to the town, and I return to Poynings this evening. I have been away a fortnight."

George longed to question her concerning life at Poynings, longed to mention his mother's name, or to say something to the girl that would lead her to mention it; but the risk was too great, and he refrained,

"Indeed! and when do you return to the Sycamores?" was all he said.

"It is quite uncertain," she replied. "I fancy my uncle means to go to London for part of the season, but we don't quite know yet; he never says much about his plans." She stopped abruptly, as if conscious that she was not conveying a very pleasing impression of her uncle. George understood her, and correctly, to refer to Mr. Carruthers.

They had descended the incline by this time, and were close to the cottage gate. It lay open, and Caesar ran up to the prim little green door.

"Come here, sir," called Clare; "please let him have the basket again, Mr. Ward. Old Willcox reared him for me, from a puppy, and he likes to see him at his tricks. Thank you. Now then, go on, Caesar."

Her hand was on the open gate, her face turned away from the cottage, towards George—it was no easier to her to say good-bye than to him, he thought; but it must be said, so he began to say it.

"Then, Miss Carruthers, here I must leave you; and soon I must leave Amherst."

Perhaps he hoped she would repeat the invitation of yesterday. She did not; she only said: "Thank you very much for your escort, Mr. Ward. Good-bye."

It was the coldest, most constrained of adieux. He felt it so, and yet he was not altogether dissatisfied; he would have been more so, had she retained the natural grace of her manner and the sweet gaiety of her tone. He would have given much to touch her hand at parting, but she did not offer it; but with a bow passed up the little walk to the cottage door, and in a moment the door had closed upon her, and she was lost to his sight.

He lingered upon the high road from which he could see the cottage, and gazed at the window, in the hope of catching another glimpse of Clare; but suddenly remembering that she might perhaps see him from the interior of the room, and be offended by his doing so, he walked briskly away in a frame of mind hard to describe, and with feelings of a conflicting character. Above the tumult of new-born love, of pride, rage, mortification, anger, hope, the trust of youth in itself, and dawning resolutions of good, there was this thought, clear and prominent:

"If I am ever to see her again, it shall be in my own character, and by no tricky subterfuge. If she ever comes to care for me, she shall not be ashamed of me."

George Dallas returned to the inn, where his taciturnity and preoccupation did not escape notice by the waiters and Mr. Page, who accounted for it by commenting on his request for writing materials, to the use of which he addressed himself in his own room, as a "hoddity of them literary gents; if they ain't blabby and blazin' drunk, they're most times uncommon sullen. This un's a poetical chap, I take it."

That evening George heard from his mother. She desired him to come to Poynings at twelve o'clock on the following Monday (this was Saturday), and to wait in the shrubbery on the left of the house until she should join him. The note was brief, but affectionate, and of course made George understand that she had received the jewels.

Late in the afternoon of the day which had witnessed her second interview with the young man whom she knew as Paul Ward, and with whom her girlish fancy was delightfully busy, Clare Carruthers arrived at Poynings. She received an affectionate greeting from Mrs. Carruthers, inquired for her uncle, learned that no communication had been received from him that day, and therefore his wife concluded that his original arrangement to return on the following Tuesday morning remained unaltered; and then went off to see that Sir Lancelot, who had been brought home from the Sycamores by a groom, was well cared for. Somehow, the beautiful animal had a deeper interest than ever for his young mistress. She touched his silken mane with a lighter, more lingering touch; she talked to him with a softer voice.

"He did not forget to mention you," she whispered to the intelligent creature, as she held his small muzzle in one hand and stroked his face with the other. "I wonder, I wonder, shall we ever see him again."

When the two ladies were together in the drawing-room that evening, and the lamps were lighted, cheerful fires burning brightly in the two grates, which were none too many for the proportions of the noble room, the scene presented was one which would have suggested a confidential, cozy chat to the uninitiated male observer. But there was no chat and no confidence there that evening. Ordinarily, Mrs. Carruthers and Clare "got on" together very nicely, and were as thorough friends as the difference in their respective ages and the trouble in the elder lady's life, hidden from the younger, would permit. But each was a woman of naturally independent mind, and their companionship did not constrain either. Therefore the one sat down at a writing-table, and the other at the piano, without either feeling that the other expected to be talked to. Had not Mrs. Carruthers's preoccupation, her absorption in the hopes and fears which were all inspired by her son, so engrossed her attention, that she could not have observed anything not specially impressed upon her notice, she would have seen

that Clare was more silent than usual, that her manner was absent, and that she had a little the air of making music an excuse for thought. The leaves of her music-book were not turned, and her fingers strayed over the keys, in old melodies played almost unconsciously, or paused for many minutes of unbroken silence. She had not mentioned the incidents of the last two days to Mrs. Carruthers, not that she intended to leave them finally unspoken of, but that some undefined feeling prompted her to think them over first;—so she explained her reticence to herself.

While Clare played, Mrs. Carruthers wrote, and the girl, glancing towards her sometimes, saw that her face wore an expression of painful and intense thought. She wrote rapidly, and evidently at great length, covering sheet after sheet of foreign letter-paper with bold firm characters, and once Clare remarked that she took a memorandum-book out of her pocket and consulted it. As she replaced the book, a slip of paper fluttered from between the leaves and fell to the ground, unobserved either by herself or Clare. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Carruthers rose, collected her papers into a loose heap upon the table, and left the room, still with the same preoccupied expression on her face. Clare went on playing for a few moments, then, finding Mrs. Carruthers did not return, she yielded to the sense of freedom inspired by finding herself alone, and, leaving the piano, went over to one of the fireplaces and stood by the low mantelpiece, lost in thought. Several minutes passed away as she stood thus, then she roused herself, and was about to return to the piano, when her attention was attracted to a small slip of paper which lay on the floor near the writing-table. She picked it up, and saw written upon it two words only, but words which caused her an indescribable thrill of surprise. They were

PAUL WARD.

"Mrs. Carruthers dropped this paper," said Clare to herself, "and *he* wrote the name. I know his hand, I saw it in the book he took the sketch in. Who is he? How does she know him? I wish she would return. I must ask her." But then, in the midst of her eagerness, Clare remembered a certain air of mystery about her chance acquaintance; she recalled the tone in which he had said, "That is my secret," the hints he had let fall that there existed something which time must clear up. She remembered, too, that he had not betrayed any acquaintance with Mrs. Carruthers, had not even *looked* like it when she had mentioned Poynings and her uncle (and Clare had a curiously distinct recollection of Mr. Paul Ward's looks); finally she thought how—surely she might be said to *know*, so strongly and reasonably did she suspect—that there were trials and experiences in Mrs. Carruthers's life to which she held no clue, and perhaps this strange circumstance might be connected with them.

"It is *his* secret and *hers*, if she knows him," the girl thought, "and I shall best be true and

loyal to them both by asking nothing, by seeking to know nothing, until I am told." And here a sudden thrill of joy, joy so pure and vivid that it should have made her understand her own feelings without further investigation, shot through the girl's heart, as she thought:

"If she knows him, my chance of seeing him again is much greater. In time I must come to understand it all."

So Clare allowed the paper to fall from her hands upon the carpet whence she had taken it, and when Mrs. Carruthers re-entered the room bringing a packet of letters which she had gone to seek, Clare had resumed her place at the piano.

TWO CRUSOES.

AFTER a lengthened sojourn in the far East, I found myself safely anchored one fine afternoon at Gibraltar, on board of a certain good steamer, commanded by a certain good captain. The ship had stopped at the Rock to take in a fresh lot of coals for England, and I had been engaged for some time on deck enjoying a black clay pipe, with a very venerable bowl, when the captain sent up the steward with a polite request that I would be kind enough to "step below for a few minutes." I went below, and in the cabin found our worthy commander seated at table, in company with the master of the brig from which we were then taking in our coal, and by the skipper of the very venerable-looking sheer hulk from which the steamers of the company to which our own belonged were wont to take in their supplies. The captain had begged of me to come down in order that I might have the opportunity of taking some rough notes of a "yarn" which the jolly-looking skipper of the sheer hulk was "spinning." I sat down at once and did so. The ancient mariner, the narrator, MR. JAMES PAINE, wore a dingy straw hat, had a full, ruddy, healthy face, and ample rotundity of frame.

In the early part of the year 1823, James Paine shipped as an able seaman on board of the schooner *Hunter*, then bound on a sealing voyage to the regions of the South Atlantic. In due time and without any particular adventure, they reached the island of Amsterdam. The first thing they did was, to land a quantity of salt which was intended to cure the seal-skins, as they obtained them. This salt, it being then fine weather, they landed near the shore.

Night coming on, they all went on board the brig and turned in, intending to complete their arrangements on the morrow. During the night, however, a gale sprang up from the west, and as the salt was in danger of being absorbed by the water, Paine, and another seaman named Proudfoot, volunteered to land, and remove it further up from the shore. Whilst engaged in this work, which took a considerable time, they being occasionally half blinded with lightning and much bewildered, the boat in which they had

landed from the vessel was carried away, quite unobserved by them.

The two men strained their eyes seawards where they supposed the schooner to be, but it had now grown utterly dark, and they could not see their own hands before them. At length a flash of lightning, more vivid and prolonged than usual, showed, to their inexpressible dismay, that the schooner had drifted with the easterly current from her moorings out of sight to sea, and that their own small boat danced solitary and tenantless upon the crest of a far-distant wave, and was likewise being rapidly borne away.

The calamity was so sudden, that they could not at the time adequately understand it. So, for the moment only concerning themselves about the loss of the boat, which would be surely attributed to their carelessness, they made the best they could of the night, and patiently awaited the dawn, under the impression that the schooner would reappear on the cessation of the gale. The day did at last dawn, but not with hope for them. Neither schooner nor boat ever appeared to their eyes again, from that fatal night to the present day.

The island of Amsterdam is, as most mariners and many landsmen know, anything but a garden of Eden. It is destitute of trees, scant of vegetation and esculent roots, and no prospect of any food save fish, which the two men possessed as yet no means of catching. Wild gulls, swarming in myriads around and on the island, screamed in anger and perhaps in mockery over their heads. The first thing to be done was to explore the island, and to keep a sharp lookout for the schooner or for any other vessel. The latter was a fruitless task, however, for at that early date (and the fact holds good even up to the present time) very few vessels touched at such a spot, and those few were themselves "sealers," like the schooner *Hunter*. During their exploration of the island, they discovered a vast number of sea-birds' eggs in the fissures of the rocks, some of which they abstracted for their first breakfast.

The next things to be done in rotation were, first, to procure fire to cook their eggs; secondly, to secure an eligible spot upon which to erect some sort of signal-staff; thirdly, to make some species of shelter from the rain and storms which frequently assail that barren spot. As for the means of quenching their thirst, the rain which lodged in the fissures of the rocks formed their only supply. Of this they discovered a little, and they both decided that no time must be lost in contriving some means to preserve water in greater quantity before the next rain should fall.

The fire they obtained in the usual manner observed by castaways, of rubbing two sticks together with due patience. Being well supplied with brushwood and coarse grass, they speedily built a rude hut. The fire, like that sacred and venerated element in the temples of the Zoroastrians, they agreed must never be allowed

to go out. A signal-staff they "fished" out of such stunted trees as the island produced. And now time began to hang heavily on their hands. Idleness tended to make them fastidious, and they began to get wearied of roasted eggs and salt, and to long for change of food. As for clothing, they only had what they wore at the time they volunteered from their berths: a shirt, trousers, and pair of shoes, each. Socks they had none, and one hat did for both. They each possessed, however, a knife, and these knives, in addition to two or three seal-skins which had been fortunately left on shore covering the salt, was all their property in that desert spot. Fortunately, however, they discovered a few large nails in some planks upon which the salt had been placed, and out of these, after great application and arguments between Paine and Proudfoot as to which was "the right way to do it," they succeeded, with the aid of stones for temporary hammers and anvils, to make a couple of very odd-looking hooks; these they "barbed," after much exertion and expenditure of time, by the aid of their knives. The next thing to be done was to procure good strong lines. This they happily effected by cutting the seal-skins into thongs, which, being carefully twisted and attached firmly to the nails, enabled them to provide themselves with fishing-tackle. They could now have fresh fish fried on heated rocks, salt fish boiled in a large bowl or basin scooped out of a piece of rock.

In this manner, three months passed with out any prospect of relief. It is true that during that period several vessels had been seen by them, but at such a great distance, that neither the signal-flash of their watch-fire by night, nor the remnants of the old shirts which they flew aloft by day, were of any avail. In the mean time, their clothes, which were none of the newest or strongest at first, began to decay; and their hair and beards became as long, matted, and shaggy as those of Peter the Wild Boy when first discovered in the forests of Germany. Their shoes were worn out, and their one hat was religiously preserved for *Sundays*. Not having adopted the plan of Selkirk for marking the lapse of time, they feared, after a while, that they had lost their reckoning altogether; but they subsequently discovered that they were only two days out of their reckoning in all.

At the end of the first three months, as they were standing on an elevated part of the island, a vessel hove in sight, holding a course which would lead her nearer to the spot than any other vessel had hitherto come, save their own. By this time Proudfoot had become dogged and phlegmatic; indifferent to anything but eating, drinking, sleeping, and, as duties, watching in his turn, and fishing. He kept either silent, or only answered Paine, who was the more active and cheerful of the two, in very inelegant monosyllables. Perceiving that the vessel bore steadily in towards the island, Paine drew the

attention of Proudfoot to her, and suggested that they should hasten down and replenish the beacon-fire. Proudfoot declared, with an oath, that it was of no use. Paine, however, persisted, and went to the spot where they kept their fire, by night and by day; having raised an immense flame and smoke, he had the satisfaction of perceiving that the vessel bore directly for the land, which happy circumstance he pointed out exultingly to Proudfoot. The vessel, which proved to be a brig, having approached as near as seemed prudent, despatched a boat to the shore, to the great joy of our Crusoes, who prepared to quit the inhospitable spot. The boat having approached near enough to the surf for the purpose of conversation, without crossing it, the mate in charge of her hailed the two men, asking them who they were, how they came there, and what they were doing? To these questions Paine having shouted out satisfactory, albeit somewhat impatient, answers, began in his turn to ask the mate to take them off to the ship. The reply was that he could not do so; but that when he returned on board he would "ask the captain." Red tape proved to be no novelty even in the South Atlantic. No persuasion of either of the castaways would induce the mate to alter his determination to take orders from head-quarters. Beginning to see the possibility of a cruel disappointment, Paine, who was a shrewd fellow, now begged for at least some fish-hooks, for which he offered to pay with eggs and fish; this model specimen of humanity replied that he "couldn't say"—he would see when he went back to the ship, and so forth—at the same time ordering the men to pull back to the brig. Paine and Proudfoot watched the boat with the most intense anxiety, until she reached the vessel, when, to their dismay and grief, the boat was hoisted on board, and the brig, without the slightest manifestation of sympathy, stood out to sea.

The inhumanity of this act needs no comment. But an avenging Nemesis followed the cruel ship. The last questions put by Paine to the mate were, what was the name of the brig, and what was her destination? He was told that she was the Hope, trader, bound from London to Van Diemen's Land. She never reached her port, as Paine afterwards discovered by diligent inquiry; nor was she ever again heard of.

Eleven dreary months now passed away, and the two men began to resign all hope of the blessings of home and civilisation. They lost, in their own personal appearance, all vestiges of being Europeans or civilised natives of any country. Their hair was long, yellow with the sun (like the Somali Africans), and matted, hanging down over their faces, backs, and shoulders. Their complexions became copper-coloured. Their beards were dense, and hung midway down their bodies. The only particle of clothing that they possessed now, was a tattered rag tied round the loins.

Eleven months soon became fourteen, and during all those fourteen months the fire was never allowed to go out by night or by day. But, more than once when the fire was on the point of expiring, both of them became so punctilious about their proper turn of duty, that neither would stir to put a stick upon it. Paine declared that it was Proudfoot's turn, and Proudfoot insisted with an oath that it was Paine's. Then, as the dread of its total extinction came upon them, both would spring up and heap on wood together. Books they had none, and all their "yarns" were worn out. It was a wretched life. Their only amusement was to talk of home and the past, in which Proudfoot sustained a monosyllabic part. They began to dread daily that their rotten lines and rough hooks would soon wear out, and then they would have to revert to roasted eggs and rain-water.

At the end of fourteen months another vessel was seen to approach the island. Once more the hearts of the abandoned mariners were buoyed up with hope, and once more they heaped their signal-fire with fuel. Paine and Proudfoot now prepared, as before, to quit the scene of their trials, and were at the height of exultation, when the vessel, after standing in for some time, bore away. Despair now took the place of joy, and they were on the point of giving all up as hopeless, when she tacked, and again stood in for the shore.

The suspense of the two men was now terrible. They both remained silently watching her movements with mingled feelings of joy and hope and misgiving; but hope predominated. As soon as the ship had approached sufficiently near, a boat was lowered, and rowed towards the fire, near which they stood. The surf was running so high that it could not come near enough for her crew to land, or for the two men to reach her. The officer in charge hailed them, and in his voice Paine unmistakably recognised that of an old schoolmate and shipmate of his. As a remarkable coincidence, it happened that the captain of this very ship (the *Palmyra*), on leaving England, had received instructions to make inquiries, when he should reach the eastern seas, regarding Paine especially, and, if he could be found, to bring him home. Keeping this in view, the officer in charge of the boat asked Paine, who had answered his hail, if that were not his name. For some reason utterly inexplicable, Paine answered that it was not. He was then asked if he had not been abandoned there by the *Hunter*. Paine denied this too, but the officer said that he knew better.

No further time was wasted in parleying, and the two men were desired to wade into the surf and swim off to the boat, which could approach no nearer without being swamped. Proudfoot could swim well, and obeyed the order at once; but Paine was unable to swim a stroke. Nevertheless, better he drowned than left behind, and he made the best he could of the matter, by wading and splashing through the surf to-

wards the boat. He lost all consciousness as to how he got on board in safety, but, to use his own words, he was "hauled into the boat somehow or other," and there he found Proudfoot. The boat was then rowed off to the ship.

As their dreary and inhospitable abode receded from the view, and they found themselves certain of safety and of home, some touch of regret mingled with their joy. They even thought of the remnant of salt on the island, of the rusty nail hooks, and the almost decayed seal-skin lines which had formed their rude fishing-tackle. The long undying watch-fire, still alight, moved them. Their old friends the sea-birds, that had so long furnished them with food, circled above the rocks, screeching out a wild farewell.

No sooner had they reached the deck of the *Palmyra*, than all on board crowded around them, and viewed them with as much astonishment as the natives of San Salvador viewed the companions of Columbus. The captain gave orders for due provision for their comfort, as far as eating and sleeping went; but requested that they would not wash, shave, or dress, but would appear before him in the morning exactly as they then were, for he wished to see them by daylight; it being now close upon night, they were taken below. In the morning they were brought before the captain again, and, as it fortunately happened there was an artist on board, they were sketched as they stood; after which they washed, shaved, and once more dressed.

The ship reached Calcutta in safety. Considerable interest was manifested by the citizens of that place in the strange history of the two men. They were lionised to such an extent, that when passing through the streets they were followed by crowds. But this was not all; a subscription was raised in their behalf, which swelled to a goodly amount, and placed them far beyond the reach of want for a long time. Paine and Proudfoot then parted. Where the latter went Paine hardly knew, nor did Paine ever see or hear of or from his companion in misery afterwards. Paine himself came to England, and has gone through a series of adventures since, the relation of which, as he himself said, would occupy days. Should any traveller to or from the East, tarrying at Gibraltar, be desirous of conversing with him, and hearing his eventful history from his own lips, they will find James Paine on board the sheer hulk *Santa Anna*, in the harbour.

Mr. Paine is a jolly-looking mariner of the old school, hale and hearty, and fully as ready to brave the battle and the breeze as he was thirty-seven years ago. The sheer hulk *Santa Anna*, of which he is master, is quite as remarkable as himself; being a very large Spanish East Indiaman of the olden time, mastless, of course, and about the same colour as the coal with which she is laden. Mr. Paine has now been eighteen years on board

of her, during which time he has never seen the other side of the Rock, and has never slept a single night on shore.

LIFE IN DEATH.

LOVE me in life, darling,
Love me in death;
E'en when my breath
Ceases to warm thee,
And my cold face
Ceases to charm thee,
Think of the days
When I was thine, darling,
When thou wert mine, darling.
Or if the gay light
Of the glad daylight
Make thee forget me,
Still, darling, let me
Come with the night hours,
Give *them* to me,
Make them *my* bright hours—
Then shalt thou be
All the day free.
Day shall be night to me
Banish'd from thee,
Dark shall be light to me
Present with thee.

EMPTY BOXES.

THIS will be, I know, but a beggarly account. There are few things in the world so hopelessly dreary to look upon, as are empty boxes. It is a truism to say that you can get nothing out of them. A full box may be picturesque, poetical. It may be Pandora's box, or one of Portia's caskets. It may be the Iron Chest, or Somebody's Luggage. It may be that notable trunk in which the mysterious Spanish Hidalgo, to whom Gil Blas was valet, kept his pistoles. It may be the coffer gorged of millions, of the Wandering Jew. It may be Antiochus's box, crammed with "ribbons, chains, and ouches," or it may be the chest with the spring lock immortalised in the story of Ginevra and the ballad of the Mistletoe Bough, or it may be the cowskin trunk in which Richard Cromwell kept the "lives and fortunes of the people of England"—in the shape of the addresses presented to him by the English municipalities when he was Lord Protector of the Commonwealth—or it may be the inscrutable sea-chest astride which Washington Irving's Dutchman went to sea in a storm. In short, a box with anything in it will furnish a plot for a melodrama or a novel, inspire poets and painters, awaken cupidity, excite ambition, fan the flame of love. With what wistful eyes have I scanned the great iron safe in a City counting-house! With what rapture have I gazed on a lady's jewel-box—the tiny casket with a patent lock, steel beneath, russa leather above—and pictured the dainty gems within, their lustre prisoned in coffins of morocco lined with white satin! Nor without a pleasant trembling—a hope not unmingled with fear—have I beheld the cash-box which Mr. Elzevir, of

Ludgate-hill, has produced from his drawer, when, my account being audited, he has been persuaded to draw a cheque in my favour. Sweet cash-box, full of cheques, crisp bank-notes, gold and silver, and sometimes of acceptances at three months and I O U's!—I say that I have trembled, for it has been just within the bounds of possibility that Mr. Elzevir, a sudden spasm of hardness coming over his heart, might push his cash-box back into the drawer, double-lock it, and suddenly remembering that my account was overdrawn, button up his pantaloons, and dismiss me chequeless. Or, how would it be if, opening the cash-box, Mr. Elzevir discovered that his cheque-book was worn to the last stump, and begged me to call the day after to-morrow?

If this paper were to be devoted to the topic of boxes that were full, you should see that I had plenty to say, and to spare. The work-box of a woman would fill a page at least. I could expatiate till you were tired on a schoolboy's play-trunk, with its hidden hoard of slate-pencil, and its inevitable substratum of contraband goods—say gunpowder, cayenne pepper, or a forbidden book;—and I am sure I could pen several columns on the subject of a box to me the most curious of all: the key box; the locked-up receptacle for things which lock up others, the wheel without the wheel, the keeper of the keepers. It is on empty boxes, however, that I am at present intent.

Empty boxes! Take that symmetrical sarcophagus of cedar which, a month since, held one hundred choice Havanas. They, the flavour of Colorado Claros, are all smoked out; you have not even preserved their ashes, which, mingled with camphorated chalk, are said to make an excellent tooth-powder, or, ground with poppy oil, will afford, for the use of the painter, a varied series of delicate greys. Old Isaac Ostade so utilised the ashes of his pipe; but, had he been aware of Havanas, would have given us pictures even more pearly in tone than those which he has left for the astonishment and delight of mankind.*

* Much has been talked in modern times about the "lost secrets" of the Venetian painters, and Messrs. Winsor and Newton have been worried to death by artists to produce new blues, new crimsons, and new yellows, by means of which the gorgeous hues of Titian and Giorgione might be rivalled. But the tints most thoroughly lost or mislaid, are to my mind the pearly grey tones of the Dutchmen. Very few modern painters seem to be aware that grey may be, and should be, a cunning compound of all colours, and not mere black and white, with a seasoning of lake, or indigo, or ochre, to make it cold or warm. The finest greys, perhaps, in modern art are those of M. Abel de Pujol, in the imitation of bas-reliefs on the coved roof of the Paris Bourse. Those who have closely examined them may have noticed that in the shadows there are great splashes of positive colour, bright vermillion, chrome, and cobalt, which, at the distance of the ordinary spectator from the picture, give pearliness and transparency to the whole.

The empty cigar-box makes you sad. You must have injured your constitution to an appreciable degree by smoking, say fifty out of that century of Colorado Claros. You have lately discovered that your cousin Tom, on whom you pressed a handful of your choicest cigars when you left him at Gravesend, on his way to Bombay, is a humbug. It was owing to your cruel and brutal persistence in smoking the last of your cigars in the Blue Boudoir, thereby disturbing the afternoon nap of the Italian greyhound, and causing that intolerable little beast to sneeze thrice, that you had last Thursday a few words with the partner of your joys and woes, and afterwards looked out in the Court Directory the private address of the judge who sits in divorce and matrimonial causes, and has power to loose and to bind. Worse than all, you have a running account with Messrs. Lope de Vega and Co., cigar merchants, of Bond-street, W., and the hundred Colorado Claros, all smoked out, remain to be paid for.

If empty boxes yield anything, the harvest is but one of regrets. The scholar who bade Albertus Magnus raise the devil for him, found, dashed in his face, an empty purse; and if you would conjure up the ghosts of dead hopes, and the phantom of the love that is no more, and the skeleton ribs, black and rotten, of the Ship of Ambition, aboard which you vowed to ride into the Port of Fame, and seize the Golden Fleece—if you would lift the veil, and recal the agony, and survey the wilderness of desolation and the valley of dry bones, I would advise you to plunge into the contemplation of empty boxes. "The late Miss Craggs's Estate." Such an inscription on a japanned tin box, in a lawyer's office near Cavendish-square, once meant to me a thousand pounds. The box was full. I saw a will, trust deeds, dividend warrants, through its tin sides. I walked round the house that held the box in my dreams, and woke up in terror, thinking that thieves had stolen it, and longed for the day for me to be twenty-one, and find a swift stock-broker, and sell my money out. It never did anybody any good. It is lost in the fastnesses of the Neilgherry Hills; it is at the bottom of the river Rhine; it is in Kensal-green. I shudder now to think that I may meet some day in Shipyard or Brokers'-row, an empty box, the japanning half worn off the tin, and the late Miss Craggs's Estate grinning out of the shadows made by piles of second-hand office furniture. I do not think I could bear that sight. I should buy the box, and scrape out all remembrance of Miss Craggs, and melt up the japanned tin to an unrecognisable lump. Saddest of empty boxes; and O the vanity of youth untoward, ever spleeny, ever froward! What a school might be built, what a house bought, what a neat little purse made against the laying of the first stone of the Asylum for Decayed Turncocks by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, what a capital venture made to the Spanish Main, with a thousand pounds! Depend upon it, the Prodigal Son had an empty box, and sat upon it

the while he tended swine and fed on draff and husks.

Saddest of empty boxes? No, not *the* saddest. There are boxes whose aspect is even more melancholy. Kicked about in yards, despised as the vilest rubbish, are the boxes which once held the sparkling chefs-d'œuvre of Mumm and Roederer, and Jacquesson, and the Widow Cliquot. Who cares for an empty champagne-box? An empty egg-box is stouter. The empty box which has contained bottles of Warren's blacking will afford a firmer rostrum from which stump orator may address his dupes. It is not generally known that the haut pas of the thrones from which theatrical kings and queens issue their decrees, and witness the evolutions of the occasional ballet, are often built up from egg-boxes. Champagne-boxes would be too fragile. This is the end, then, of all your frothing, and popping, and spuming forth effervescent delight. A bottle, if it be not cracked, may serve again. Shot, or a wire besom, may cleanse its interior. It may be degraded to serve as a candlestick for a tallow dip, but it may be washed and purified, re-filled, re-corked, re-wired, re-wrapped in pink paper, re-exported, to make the name of the Widow Cliquot famous to the ends of the earth. But its empty box will never serve again. Rough deals are cheap, and can be easily nailed together, and daubed with mystic trades-marks and legends, as "Fragile," "With care," "This side upward," and a portrait of a full (not empty) bottle.

Writers who set up for cynics are very apt to talk of the skeleton closet which is said—although I do not believe anything of the sort—to form part of the architectural arrangements of every modern house. At least, I do not believe in the solitary skeleton, the one bony osteological bogey, hanging to a nail in one particular cupboard, of which only the master—if it be not the mistress—of the establishment keeps the key. But if you will mount to an apartment at the top of the house—an apartment which is open to all, cook, butler, and housemaid, and whither the children often repair for the purpose of playing at wild beasts, or at shops—you may find, not one, but twenty skeletons, in the shape of empty boxes. There are the portmanteaus, long since bulged into uselessness; the bullock-trunks of the lieutenant who died in India; the bonnet-boxes of the girl who bloomed into a woman and is now a widow; the carpet-bag you used to take with you on those rare fishing excursions to Walton-on-Thames; the little, fat, black valise which was your companion during that notable week you stayed at the country-house of the Lord Viscount Toombsley—the only lord you ever knew—and he cut you dead in the Burlington Arcade last Wednesday was a week. Pleasant journeys, joyous outings, trips to Paris, runs to the Rhine, wedding tours, jolly friends, pretty girls, merry meetings: the spectres of all these linger about the empty boxes. Look at the luggage-labels. You can hear the pat of the paste-brush, and see the red-faced porter

trundling the luggage along the platform. You are off by the express. A guard has winked at you. He feels that you want a locked-up coupé, that you mean to smoke, and that he will have half-a-crown. You are off for Paris. You are off for Switzerland. You are off for the East. Empty boxes! I have one, the bare sight of the luggage-labels on which fills me with sorrow, with remorse, with bitter shame. "Liverpool," "Manchester," "Boston," "Niagara," "Madrid," "Riga," "Cronstadt," "Wien," "Seville," "Frankfort," "Homburg," "Venezia," "Paris," "Macon," "Milan"—it is a Bradshaw cut up into strips and stuck haphazard all over the lid and sides. I thank the prudent porters who have striven to tear off some of the labels. I am spared the remembrance of some. This empty box has held my gala clothes, my dearest books, my choicest photographs, my rarest bits of bric-à-brac, and "the soul of the licentiate Pedro Garcia." And what has come of it all, beyond forty years, an augmenting stomach, a damaged liver, and a confused consciousness that one has made rather a mess of it, and had better have stayed at home.

But we will endeavour to be cheerful, if you please. Cheerful! How *can* cheerfulness be extracted from empty boxes: far less when I am about to conduct you to the dullest and gloomiest of all the boxes in the empty world. Silent rows the songless gondolier, and sullen plash his oar-blades on the waters of the backslum canal. I am going to see the mournfullest sight in Venice. At the prow, crouches the hotel guide. He, too, looks sad, although he is in my service to-day; for I have told him that to-morrow I shall have no need for his services. I have "done" all the lions of Venice twice over; and Venice is in a state of siege, and I am the only tourist in the desolate city; and my guide has been half starving for weeks, and will wholly starve, I fear, when he has spent the last two florins I purpose to bestow upon him. For charity begins at home; and few travellers care to grant weekly pensions to hotel guides out of work, who are always bores, and often rascals. The oars continue dully to plash; and the gondolier—who has not had a fare for a week—only breaks the sickening silence by his lugubrious cry of warning when he turns a corner. There was a time when I went a gondoliering with the pleasantest of poodles at the prow; but darker and darker days have set in for Venice; and things have gone from bad to worse, and the city has faded into a cemetery. Whither are we bound? To the magnificent palace which has been turned into the governmental pawn-shop, and through whose windows, now close barred, but whose balconies were once hung with rich tapestries, and over whose sills fair ladies smiled, mountains of unredeemed pledges in ghostly bundles palely loom? Not thither. To the deserted halls of the great Pesaro Palace, now converted into an old curiosity-shop, rented by a Jew from Geneva? Not thither. To the empty arsenal, with its

shipless basins, and ropeless rope-walks—the arsenal where Dante once saw the pitch and tar boiling in huge caldrons that reminded him of the Stygian Lake? No; not thither. Nor to the island of Murano, where the huge mirrors and crystal chandeliers of Venice were once made, but where now there is only a paltry manufactory of toy-beads. Nor to picture-gallery, nor church, nor cabinet of mosaics. We are only on our way to see some empty boxes.

A dreadful beggar-man, by his father's side a leper, by his mother's a hunchback, and himself an idiot; a creature whose rags are so intimate with his flesh that the tatters might be strips of unwashed epidermis—this specimen of the Republic in Ruins, with a long hook draws our gondola to the landing-place, holds out his ragged arm to help me to shore, cringing low as he begs an obolus for the sake of the Madonna, and is grateful for the farthing which I give him. (For, as all day long, the beggars of Venice buzz about you, and you are bound to relieve, say one in ten, you will find that a soldo, or farthing, at a time will make, before midnight, a considerable vacuum in your pocket.) We mount some slimy steps, and pass under a colonnade, whose stones are damp and green, and recall those of a dead-house by the water-side. Between each pair of columns hangs a huge lamp, some faded gilding clinging to its ironwork, and its top crowned with the battered effigy of a Phoenix. "Those lamps," whispers the guide, "have not been lighted for seven years." We stand before an old wooden door, the knocker and the keyhole red with rust, the huge-headed nails which once studded it half gone, the holes left black and meaningless, like the sockets of dead eyes. Paint it must have had, this door, in the bygone; but mildew has picked the pigment away, and streaks and smears of oozy moisture laugh grimly at what the painter's brush may have effected years ago. This was once a stage door. Hither the pets of the ballet came tripping to rehearsal, with wreaths of artificial flowers in their reticules, and practising shoes under their arms. Here, the servitors of the Venetian nobility left perfumed billets. Here, the great prima donna, Assoluta di Cartello, landed from her own splendid gondola, and, perhaps, condescended to be assisted to shore by the primo tenore. Where once her stately feet trod, is only now the brackish sea-slime. We knock at the door, and, after a while, a Judas wicket opens, and through the grating peers a wrinkled old parchment face, with a few white bristles on the chin, which Balthazar Denner might have painted. A piping voice inquires our will. I answer, that I wish to see the empty boxes, and I softly slap some loose florins in my pocket. The Judas trap closes; but, anon, the door itself is opened, and a little old man, who might have been a junior clerk in an office close to the Rialto, when Shylock did business there—who, as a specimen of Venice Preserved—seemingly in a solution of garlic—is highly respectable, no doubt, but who is assuredly the nastiest old man I have set eyes upon during

many a long day's march—entreats me, with many bows and complimentary adjurations, to enter. We cross a vestibule—the stage door-keeper's den—and see the rusty nails whence once hung the keys of the dressing-rooms, and the places of the racks where the perfumed billets once rested. It is inexpressibly dingy, and smells of lamp-oil a hundred years old. The nasty old man has kindled a rushlight, and, by its pale glimmer, guides us up a damp stone staircase. Then we go down some steps, then mount again, then pass through a narrow corridor. I remember that, some months ago, a guide as old and as nasty led me up and down the stone staircases in the palace of the Escorial. He was a sexton, and took me to the sepulchre where the kings and queens of Spain are buried in stone boxes, resting on shelves, and where there are yet some empty boxes waiting for the kings and queens of Spain that are to die.

We emerge into a dim area, and stand on the stage of an enormous theatre. The sconces of the footlights seem to mark the boundaries of another world, and all beyond them yawns the dark vasty gulf of pit. From a window in the topmost gallery darts, sharp and clear, one transverse ray of light, and I am enabled to make out at last five tiers of boxes, all perfectly empty. The woodwork of the stage is half decayed. There are as many inequalities on its surface as in the mosaic pavement of St. Mark's church. Can this rotten and grimy expanse, whose stiffened traps might be the "drops" on which doomed wretches stand, the ropes round their necks secured to the timbers of the flies above, be the same boards on which Ellsler, Cerito, Taglioni, have danced, in the midst of a sea of gas, and a shower of bouquets and a storm of plaudits? Can this be the place where Billington and Catalani, Pasta and Malibran, have sung? Yes; look behind you; piled pell-mell against the stark damp walls, rigid and faded, like the mummies of Titans, are the "flats" and "wings" and set pieces of the place. There are Norma's altar, and Amina's bridge, and Zerlina's boudoir, and Don Giovanni's villa, and Ninus's tomb, and Marta's spinning-wheel, and the supper-table of Lucrezia Borgia. I follow the nasty old man up and down more dark staircases and through more dark corridors, and now he unlocks a door, and I stumble into a kind of cell, which, the rushlight being held up and waved around, turns out to be a proscenium box, with a frescoed ceiling, and walls brave with mirrors and damask hangings. I have nearly broken my shin over an antique fauteuil once splendid in carving, gilding, and velvet, but which, on inspection, turns out to have but three legs; and my foot is caught, to my almost overthrow, in one of the holes of a once gorgeous Turkey carpet. As we pass from the box, the nasty old man holds his rushlight to the central panel of the door, and there I see a flourishing coat of arms, with as many quarterings as there were in the scutcheon of the Princess Cune-gonde, beloved of Candide. But marked with

the stigmata of desolation is all that heraldry. The blazonry has faded, or has turned from sable and gules to grubbiness. I cannot make out the motto beneath, but it should be "Resurgam," seeing how remarkably like the whole affair is to the hatchments set up by cheap undertakers, who strive to persuade the natives of Soho or Tottenham-court-road in far-off London to allow them to conduct their funerals, by heraldically hinting in their windows that they have already buried half Boyle's Court Guide.

This proscenium box, and the next, and the next, all round, from the P. S. to the O. P. side, belong to the proudest families of the Venetian nobility. The house, indeed, belongs to a proprietary, and three-fourths of the shareholders are Venetian nobles. On many, many box doors are their spectral achievements of arms and their antique titles. Tier above tier, vasty gulf of pit, stately crush-room with mirrors yet uncracked, and settees of velvet, and ceiling of fresco, and flooring of gesso, but all obscure and faded; corridor, and lobby, and ante-chamber, and grand staircase, and vestibule, are haunted by pallid spectres, calling themselves Foscari and Falier, Grimani and Contarini, Pesaro and Grani, Papadopoulo and Nani-Mocenigo. I return to the stage, and peer into the cavern of shadows, sharp sected by that transverse ray from the topmost gallery, when, all at once, the empty boxes fill! Yes; there they are, fair women and brave men, in veils, and lace, and silk, and satin, and brodered stuffs, with swords, and fans, and flashing gems. The great theatre is lighted a giorno. The huge chandelier blazes up with countless crystals, in the midst of a frescoed firmament; and then the orchestra fills too, and I see the conductor, white-gloved, waving his bâton. I hear the loud bassoon, and the crash of the cymbals, and the scraping of many fiddles. The footlights flash up, like the demon lights in the Freischütz. A vision in gauze and silk and artificial flowers bounds by me. It is Made-moiselle Taglioni. Why not? The Queen of Dance is alive still, and it would do her old bones good to come and foot a final jig in this place. For this is the famous Opera House of LA FENICE. Yonder, in his box of state, is the King of Italy. Around him are the nobility and the beauty, not alone of Venice, but of his whole magnificent kingdom—There's no such thing; at least, not yet. There is nothing but darkness, and desolation, and empty boxes. If I can find e'er a ghost to tenant the state box, it will be a phantom in a white coat—the Cavaliere Toggenburg, indeed Luogotenente, or civil governor of Venice, representing the Austrian Kaiser. I see this ghost of Toggenburg continually squabbling with the noble shareholders of La Fenice, worrying and baiting them, and they, it must be owned, rendering him as good as he gives; for the Italians are eminently skilled in the art of ingeniously tormenting, and these fifty years past the Venetians, if they have groaned under tyranny, and suffered misery from the presence of the stranger, have at least succeeded in making

their masters desperately uncomfortable. Sir John Falstaff declined to march through Coventry with his ragged regiment; but I could tell of a penance far more disagreeable—to be in command of a regiment not at all ragged, but beautifully made up, and then to be sent to Coventry, and quartered in Coventry, and forced to stop in Coventry, year after year, to be cut, shunned, loathed, scowled upon, scorned, when, at the bottom of their hearts, your command is really a very jolly regiment, fond of waltzing, and good cheer, and blithesome company. Cavaliere Toggenburg wishes La Fenice to be opened, in order that everybody may enjoy themselves, and that his tight-waisted, white-coated officers may flirt with the Venetian ladies, and listen to the opera for fourpence-halfpenny, according to the tariff made and provided in dear old unsophisticated Deutschland. But the noble shareholders of La Fenice snarl “No!” If they open the theatre at all, it shall be to hang it with black crape, and light it with corpse-candles, and intone a mortuary mass there, for Venice, laid out on the Lagoons so cold and stark. “Come,” cries Toggenburg, “let bygones be bygones. Here are fifty thousand florins as a subvention from my government. Engage an energetic impresario and a first-rate troupe. Let us have plenty of masked balls next carnival, and the Austrian hymn, with full chorus, on the Kaiser’s birthday!” The noble shareholders will have none of Toggenburg’s money. At the last carnival ball given here, at the direct invitation, or rather under the coercion, of the government, there were but six maskers, and this forlorn half-dozen were dressed and paid by the police. From 1859—the year of hoped-for liberation, but, as it turned out, the year of the renewal of the lease of Venetian slavery—unto the year 1866 La Fenice has been entirely closed, and the spider has woven his web, and the flea has gone to sleep for want of somebody to bite, in these empty boxes.

Empty, but not, perchance, for ever. Ere these lines shall be printed, it is to be hoped and believed that the emptiness of La Fenice will have become a thing of the past—that the splendid house will be really lighted a giorno—that a substantial King of Italy will sit in the state box and listen, not to the Austrian Kaiser’s, but to his own national hymn—and that the boxes of this historical theatre will be full to overflowing of the noblest blood, the brightest beauty, the keenest intellect, and the soundest worth, of the peninsula.

TERRIBLE STRUGGLE WITH A TIGER.

How well can I remember the scene represented by our encampment on the night of the day previous to the horrible day I am about to describe, as Fantom and I sat in our easy-chairs outside the tents, after a long and dusty ride! All seems as fresh to my memory as though it occurred yesterday. The bright and glaring moon, whose silvery but dazzling light played upon our tents; the shadowy outline of our

horses, picketed a short distance off; the ever and again recurring sound of their blowing nostrils; and further off still, the dusky forms of servants squatting around their fires and often peering through steam into the interior of a cooking utensil; the distant hum of conversation amongst them, and the silent and almost stealthy approach of “Gungiah,” our “shickaree,” with his usual evening report, are all vividly before me. Gungiah replied to our question of “what news?” that “all was good news;” that during his search after “Kubber” that day, he had come across a village in which there was a great commotion, a “Gouli,” or herdsman, having had one of his herd carried away by a tiger; about whose size and ferocity he brought the usual exaggerated description. He was a man who thoroughly understood his business, and having ascertained the exact spot where the occurrence had taken place, the number of beaters procurable at the village, and carefully examined the spot, had engaged some fifty men to be ready for beating by daybreak next morning; he was pleased to add, that “our names, as hunters, had become great,” and that our generosity was well known: so that the villagers were not only willing but anxious to destroy the spoiler of their herds and to finger our rupees.

Here was glorious news! We had set out for a few days’ nilghaie and antelope shooting, with the off chance of meeting with a cheetah or a bear, but a tiger we had not dared to hope for. Gungiah was really an adept at his calling: about middle height; of spare, almost emaciated frame, but with sinews and muscles like whipcord; his extremely scanty apparel, consisting of a dark-coloured, perhaps dirty, cloth round his loins, a dusky cloth skull-cap, and a pair of rough village-made sandals. He carried a double-barrelled fowling-piece in his right hand, half in the fashion of a Robilla and half like a sportsman; and in his left hand were a brace of wild ducks that he had come across at some tank on his road home. Dismissing him with a strict caution to be early afoot, we called to our boys to bring our rifles for inspection. Having carefully seen that a sufficient quantity of bullets, powder, caps, patches, and all the rest, were placed in the shickar-bags, we turned in. Comfortably wearied with our long and dusty ride, we had not much time or inclination to ponder on to-morrow’s glories before sleep overpowered us.

So soundly had we slept, that it seemed as if we had but just dismissed Gungiah, when we were aroused by some nudges, and a voice saying, “Suppose master going to make shooting, time to get up?” Despatching a hot cup of tea, we were not long before we had arrayed ourselves in our hunting costume, and by the time we had mounted our horses the first red streak of dawn was visible in the horizon. Giving a rifle to each of our horsekeepers, and another to each of our body-men, together with the shickar-bags and knives, we set out, preceded by Gungiah, in the direction of our beat. Gungiah informed us that

the ravine in which the tiger had taken up his quarters after sucking the blood of his victim, was four "cos"—about eight miles—distant, that the tiger was certain to have returned to the carcase during the night, and that having, according to the custom of tigers, gorged himself, he would as certainly retreat at daylight to his former hiding-place, which abounded with the shrubs in which tigers much delight. He also said that the ravine was beautifully adapted for beating, that a dry watercourse ran along the bottom of it, on the banks of which several trees convenient for perching on were to be found, and that as soon as the beat commenced the tiger would endeavour to retreat unseen along it. Everything appeared to favour us; the ravine, from all accounts, seemed almost to have been made for us; there had been no difficulty in obtaining beaters; and, altogether, we beguiled away the journey, smoking our cheroots, and thinking how surprised and envious our fellows would be when we should relate to them at mess our glorious day's sport.

After a little more than two hours' ride, during which the sun had become much higher and considerably warmer, Gungiah pointed to a densely wooded ravine, and, some half mile away from it, the forms of the beaters collected in a mass were visible. A venerable looking old man with a very white turban and "ungreka," bearing across his shoulders an old cheetah skin peon's belt, with a plate on which were sundry cabalistic characters, could be seen approaching from the crowd. We soon found that he was the "Potail," or head man, of the village. He made a very deep obeisance, bringing his hand two or three times nearly to the earth, and making a motion as though he were throwing something on his head, indicative of the immense quantity of dust he was figuratively humbling himself with. He stood with slightly bent knees and hands clasped in a beseeching attitude, wagging his head slowly from side to side. His humility was overpowering. After a great deal of blarney and many more lies, we obtained from him the information that he had collected some hundred and twenty beaters, with tom-toms and other hideous music, each of whom were ready to die in our service.

On reaching the mouth of the ravine we dismounted, and, taking our rifles, consulted with Gungiah as to the best spot at which to station ourselves. He told us that he had heard from the Gouli whose cow had been destroyed, that, as he had anticipated, the tiger had returned during the night to feast upon the carcase, but had dragged it some short distance up the ravine. This, he said, was all in our favour, as we should now be able to reach a couple of trees that he had noted as being very likely perches, without fear of disturbing the brute. His plan of campaign was, that, escorted by him, we should take up our positions on the trees, and then that he should return to the beaters. His object was to prevent the beast from escaping by the opposite

end of the ravine, and to force him to thread the whole length of the nullah, and so bring him under our trees; for this purpose he intended dividing the beaters, and sending one half quietly along one side, and the other half quietly along the other side of the ravine, until they met at its head, at the same time ordering them to extend themselves like light infantry, and at a given signal, when they were all in their places, to commence to beat.

We found that Gungiah's opinion as to the admirable position of the trees was perfectly correct. They were separated from each other about a hundred yards, and, as I was the worse shot of the two, I agreed to take the furthest off; for, in the event of my failing to bag the animal, Pantom, who was a crack shot, would be sure to have him as he hastened towards the mouth of the ravine.

After a little scrambling, we were safely seated on branches that admitted a fair view of the surrounding jungle, and our body-men were placed on the same tree at a convenient distance for handing a fresh rifle, but so as not to interfere with our view. Having seen us safely lodged, Gungiah stealthily withdrew, and for some time we awaited in breathless silence and with beating hearts for the commencement of the work. After waiting nearly twenty minutes, which, in our anxious state, appeared to us to be as many hours, we were startled by the yells and howls of the beaters. The noise was truly terrific, the sound of the tom-toms reverberating again and again from the sides of the ravine and the neighbouring hills. They had scarcely proceeded a hundred yards before that thrilling cry which denotes that game is afoot ran along the whole line of beaters; my attendant silently held up two fingers, from which I judged that there were a couple of tigers—male and female, no doubt. The beaters proceeded rather slower and more cautiously, but with more vigorous howling, and now and again responding to Gungiah's commands. Gazing watchfully around me, I thought I saw a leaf of a shrub, overhanging the nullah some twenty yards from my tree, move, and, at the same instant, my attendant touched me, and pointed in that direction. How my heart throbbed! Presently, gliding noiselessly along, like a cat after a bird, and without breaking a twig, I saw a huge tiger. In a second my rifle was levelled; a flash, a crack, and an angry roar followed. The brute bounded out into the small open space below my tree, and made a couple of angry strokes with his two fore-paws in the air. I knew, therefore, that I had hit him; but, not perceiving me, he bounded off into the jungle.

My blood was up; my attendant's remonstrances were in vain; down I jumped from the tree, ordering him to follow; and proceeded anxiously to track my victim, whom I supposed to be mortally wounded, lying in some neighbouring thicket. I peered keenly hither and thither into the bushes, expecting momentarily to see

his dead [carcase. It was not long before I caught sight, instead, of his glaring live eyes. Before I had even time to raise my rifle to my shoulder, with a roar and a bound he was upon me. A flash, a confused roll over and over with something soft, a hot blast of breath on my cheek, a snap, an excruciating pain in my left arm, and I felt myself being dragged through bushes and thorns.

My senses did not leave me. I was conscious of my clothes being torn to rags, and of the warm blood trickling all over my face. The brute did not take me far, but stopped in some high grass, still retaining my wounded arm in his mouth; my other arm had been so crippled, either in the fall or during the time I was being dragged, that I was totally unable to get at my shickar-knife.

As I lay there held by the brute, and nearly dead, I could distinctly hear my attendant calling for help; the sounds of the beaters, not howling now; Fantom questioning my attendant nearer and nearer. I attempted to call out, but, at the first sound of my voice, the tiger's jaws tightened on my arm, and, placing a paw on my thigh, with an angry growl he warned me to keep silent. I felt myself growing weaker and weaker; I was sure that I must die; the tiger had tasted my blood, and should Fantom fail in rescuing me, I should be crunched and devoured. It seemed hard to die so in that distant land, just when my furlough was approaching. I thought of home, and fancied I could hear the bells of the dear old village church ringing. I made so desperate an effort, that I broke from the tiger's fangs.

It was a dream. It was the dream of an old seasoned Indian safe at home again. I had been lying on my left arm, which was cramped and numb, and on a peg near the head of the bed hung my wife's petticoat—one of those new-fashioned broad-striped petticoats, which, I have no doubt, by the dim light of the night-light, as I lay half awake, had suggested to my half consciousness the idea of a tiger.

A MERE SCRATCH.

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"This, then, is your answer?" said George Gosling, in a voice that emotion rendered almost inarticulate.

George was twenty-four. With the famed old baronetcy of which he was the representative, there had descended to him the estate of Gosling Graze, and sixteen thousand a year. These, with himself, he had placed at the disposal of Miss Mildred Mulcaster, and, from the tone of his observation, it would appear that the young lady had decided in his disfavour.

Sir George had been taken by surprise. The like may be said of the ingenuous, single-hearted reader, when apprised that Miss Mulcaster had entered into deliberate engagements with her lover, accepting a betrothal ring, supplemented

with gifts innumerable; had written to, or received from him, as many letters as an ordinary postman of these degenerate days could lift; had polked, deux-tempsed, and otherwise circled with him at least one hundred and fifty miles; had, in effect, deported herself on all, or most occasions (for she was wayward and given to teasing), as an engaged young person should.

"Yes, then, is your answer?"

"Yes. Take it," said Miss Mulcaster; "and," extending her white hands, "as they say in melodramas, *be happy*."

She was laughing. But George had not studied the map of that fair face three anxious years, for nothing. The laugh was a disguise. Therefore, though stricken with a miserable apprehension, he hesitated for an instant to accept his fate.

"But, Mildred——"

"Miss Mulcaster—Sir George Gosling," interrupted the young lady, as though reintroducing those parties on a new footing.

George resumed:

"You will, you must, forgive me, Mil—Miss Mulcaster—if, for the moment, I cannot successfully imitate your self-possession. It is a great gift. I envy you. I will not ask——"

"Don't. It would be useless."

"Mildred—can you justify this conduct?"

"I shall not try."

"I mean, to yourself?"

"It is to myself I have already appealed—my calmer self. Flattered at being at length consulted, that extremely sensible and discreet adviser frankly declares that the thing is impracticable—was never, in reality, within the limits of possibility—and that its ever having seemed so is a weakness on my—my common self's part, only to be atoned for by an instant dismissal of the idea by my other self. You understand?"

"Only," replied George, with a sad smile, "that the complicated machinery of such a court of appeal would, if generally adopted, greatly diminish the confidence we delight to repose in every act and word of those we love. Ah, Mildred—there, forgive me—we are creatures of habit; is it only now that you have deemed it worth the pains to inquire, of one or both these differing selves, what were your real feelings towards me? *Now?*"

"No. I knew them. They have never changed," said Mildred, slightly flushing.

"How! Not changed? And our union impossible."

"Quite. I abandon it, taking every consequence."

"And your words—your professions——"

"Go—as bets do—with the stakes!" laughed the young beauty, recklessly. But the still augmenting colour entered a sullying protest against this assumption of indifference.

"And—and those presents?" stammered George.

"Await your disposal, sir."

She pointed haughtily to a side-table, absolutely laden with articles of the costliest kind.

"Good Heavens!" said the young man—"that was not my meaning. I appealed to these things but as witnesses of the position in which we stood to one another. Your acceptance alone gave them value. At least, spare me the pain of looking upon what you approved—accepted—have used, and worn. Bestow them upon whom you will, destroy them, do anything but fill my rejected hand with my gifts, alike deemed worthless."

"I am too easily entreated, much too easily," said Miss Mildred, looking so exquisitely beautiful, that poor George's heart thrilled with a wild despair. "But, on certain conditions, I may grant you this one thing. Do you hear, sir? It must be distinctly provided and understood, that, neither by look, word, nor deed, will you ever recur to the position we have lately held to one another. Do you agree?"

"I am at your mercy. But—"

"Now, remember, I never threaten. I act," said the imperious young lady. "The coolest footing of ordinary acquaintance. Think of me, when you *must* think (and don't say I didn't frankly warn you against doing so at all), no worse than circumstances seem to demand, for, somehow, I would like to retain the—the fringe—the hem, though somewhat frayed—of your good opinion—honest simple garment as it was! And now, Sir George Gosling, as I believe I have already remarked, farewell! Be happy."

She rose, with a company-air, to which George would have preferred a stab, and seemed expecting him to leave her. But the young man still hesitated. The enigma was yet unsolved.

"Miss Mulcaster," he said, very calmly, "I have bowed to your decision, and, to the utmost of my ability, I will observe your somewhat difficult conditions. I put aside all pretence of a *right* to question you, and, only as a matter of further generosity on your part, do I entreat of you to furnish me with some clue to the fault—the misadventure—I know not how to term it—that has produced this change. You see I do not plead for a reversal of the sentence, I do but inquire its provocation."

Mildred looked sorrowfully at the imploring face of her young lover.

"You ask what you have done? Nothing."

"Nothing? No fault?"

"None—of your own."

"What, then, can you mean?"

"The errors of one generation," said the young lady, gravely, "are frequently adopted by its successors. So far, Sir George, you cannot be held guiltless, and must, at all events, bear the penalty, like others of your name."

"My ancestors have not, I believe, been wholly undistinguished," replied the young man, with quiet dignity. "True, in the course of a descent of more than twenty generations, *some* unworthy deed may have cast a temporary stain on our escutcheon, but—"

"The crime to which I refer," said Miss Mulcaster, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, "has been transmitted—wilfully and wittingly—from sire to son. Your n—n—"

The word was lost in a suffocating sob. Mildred was weeping without restraint.

"My *what*?" said her bewildered lover.

"N—na—name!"

"Name! What name?"

"Nonsense! You know I like G—George," sobbed the young lady. "It's the—oth—the other. How your e—eldest ancestor could have c—come by it, is a m—mys—mystery. Stupid old b—b—booby!"

"Booby!" repeated George, aghast.

"Enough of this," exclaimed the spirited young beauty. "No power on earth would induce me to appear in society burdened with the style and title of Lady Gosling. And that is the secret you wanted."

There was something in her manner that, enamoured as he was, irritated George. He drew himself up rather laughingly.

"Seeing that it is the prevailing custom," he remarked, "for ladies to assume the name of those they honour with their hands, Miss Mulcaster must surely have had this terrific condition within her contemplation when she engaged herself to my unworthy self."

"She had," replied the young lady—"she had, however, reasonable grounds for hoping that the absurdity which, you yourself must admit, attaches to your name, might be softened—either by returning to what, I make no doubt, was the original spelling—Gausselin—or by the simple introduction of a *t* in the middle, Gosling, you know—which, with the *o* very long, wouldn't be so bad. Both these hints were suggested to you—once by dear mamma, once by Louey—but, except eliciting a display of temper for which, I dare say, you were afterwards sorry (if you were not, it wasn't *my* fault), the remonstrance had no effect."

"Fancy remonstrating with a man on the name his fathers have borne for six centuries!" said George. "I should have been greatly to blame if I had allowed you for one moment to believe that I could comply with either of your ingenious schemes for the amelioration of my patronymic. Still, Miss Mulcaster permitted her engagement to continue."

"She did. (It's a capital idea of yours, that of speaking in the third person, as if I were at the antipodes.) Miss Mulcaster, sir, acted as you describe. She was, in some respects, a very remarkable woman—possessing considerable strength of mind, and singular persistence in purpose. She fought with her own prejudices, and imagined, at one time, she had overcome them. She liked—she honoured—nay, well, she *loved*—the bearer of a hideous name. But, under the actual burden of that name, her nature would have pined, succumbed."

"Enough, Miss Mulcaster," said the young baronet, thoroughly roused. "I have the honour to wish you good morning."

"I am not jesting, Geo—Sir George"—(and the young lady became suddenly grave). "Do not leave me under a false impression. I did strive—strive honestly—to overcome what you are free to call my folly, but in vain. It is

most unfortunate. Any other name I could have borne. But, so long as you remain a Gosling, George, I cannot, will not, be your wife."

"You are aware that a change of name involves the loss of the estate; but, Mildred," added the young lover, "if *you* are content to be poor——"

"I am *not*," said Mildred, frankly.

"Can this be so? Neither share my poverty nor my name?"

"I have proved to you that I cannot help myself," said Mildred. "I am a naughty, foolish girl, and should have no excuse, had I not, with all my might, combated this strange feeling. You are very good and generous, and, if I have pretended to treat the matter lightly, it was because I dared not approach it in a serious spirit. George, forgive me"—and the beautiful head, under the influence of one of Mildred's rare touches of feeling, stooped penitently forward—"all that I have said is true. Granted, I should have known my weakness sooner; but better late than *too* late." And she held out her hand.

"For pity's sake, reflect," said George.

"That's nonsense," retorted Mildred, impatient to the last. "George, I tell you it is all over; shake hands, and go."

Sir George took the little cold white hand, adorned with one ring—a beautiful sapphire—his first gift (she had retained that), and held it wistfully for a moment. In one month it was to have been his own. He looked at it, dropped it as if it had given him a mortal sting, gazed once in Mildred's face, and left her.

As the young baronet rode down the lime avenue just beginning to be touched with the first tints of autumn, he felt as if the summer of his own life had departed too. He might live on this many a year, live to pardon the wrong he had sustained, live to marry some other than Mildred, perhaps to tell, in after years—names suppressed—the warning story of his first youthful passion. But the first, the peerless flower of love, had been rudely stricken down ungathered; and there are hearts which, in such a case, disdain to produce another.

George reviewed the whole history of his blighted affection. He had known Mildred nearly twenty years—at all events, at their first interview, the young lady, clad in a white spencer, a frill, and a coral necklace, came, led by her nurse, to pass the day with his sister Clara. The intimacy increased. There were adventurous excursions upon a rocking-horse—an exceedingly restive animal, which Mildred would only consent to mount on condition that George restrained him firmly by the bit. There was a long-remembered gooseberry-raid, in which blood was shed and a frock severely compromised; likewise a long and fond inspection of that inexhaustible phenomenon, the golden fish; and, finally, a tiptoe visit to the extraordinary novelty of a chaffinch's nest, redeemed, at a ransom of twopence, from the gardener's boy.

Even at this early period, the question of a

matrimonial alliance had been apparently mooted, since George, rescuing his love from a gloomy dungeon of three chairs, escaped with her on the rocking-horse, the lady holding on, with difficulty, by the untrustworthy tail. Over-taken, in a distant province of Tartary, by a pursuing band composed of Clara Gosling, the fugitives surrendered, but only on condition of being united on the spot, the ceremony being obligingly performed by the pursuer herself.

Upon the death of General Mulcaster, his widow gave up her town-house, and, with her two children—Mildred being, at that time, thirteen, and Louisa ten—came to reside at The Haie, a pretty but not very extensive property, some five or six miles from Gosling Graize.

There was no talk now of little husbands and wives. Miss Mulcaster, aged thirteen, understood no ribald jesting with her dignity. With this young lady the process of spoiling—instituted by her father—had been carried out with such fidelity and success by her mother, that, but for the child's really generous and loving nature, she would have been the most intolerable little tyrant that ever ruled a household. Few could resist the spell of her marvellous beauty; fewer still the thousand witcheries the little despot had at her command. As for the household themselves, they had long been willing bond-slaves, the only strife among them being which should be the readier to obey.

It was, perhaps, sister Louey, bright and clever as her elder, and so pretty that, but for a sister so unfairly fair, *she* might have been the spoiled one—it was Louey alone who dared, on very great and critical occasions, to run counter to the sovereign's will. On some of these, poor Louey—like other too-forward revolutionists—had been the victim of a cruel treachery. Her mother—her very mother—after instigating her, by every species of argument, to insurrection, would, if the movement failed, after a feeble demonstration of support, desert her ally, and, craven as she was, purchase immunity by openly denouncing the mutiny she had fomented!

There had occurred one period of intense perplexity. It had been hinted by a devoted band of real well-wishers—nay, was tacitly admitted at The Haie itself—that a brief interval of *school* between Miss Mulcaster's childhood and womanhood would be decidedly advantageous to the latter. But how to effect it? *School!* School for the indomitable Mildred—petted, wilful idol, whom one and all had joined in placing beyond the pale of restraint or reproof of any kind! But for the heroic devotion of Louisa, nothing would, perhaps, have been done. She, who was to have remained at home, undertook not only to present the project to her sister's mind, but, in the event of success, to accompany her, as school-mate and general attendant, her duties being to dress, soothe, and comfort her, assist her with her lessons, take her punishments, if any, and generally abet and promote all such whims, fancies, and eccentricities as might be found compatible with scholastic life.

Louey's proposal elicited but little surprise. It was, everybody felt, a natural thing, and merely fell to Louey, as it were, in the line of duty, no other slave being eligible for the office required. So, gravely kissing her mother, as though she were bound on some remote and perilous mission, Louisa sought her sister.

To the unspeakable amazement of the whole house, Miss Mulcaster received the unexpected representation not only with clemency, but with pleasure. She had been in search of a new idea. She was a little wearied of always having her own way. "School!" School was the very thing she had been wanting. (Louey assented.) When should they go? To day?

In about three months, Mrs. Mulcaster made her final selection of a school. There were but seven pupils, and the terms, owing to the carriage and ladies'-maids, were somewhat high; but the opportunity of two vacancies with Mrs. Lofthouse was not to be let slip, and thither, accordingly, the young ladies repaired.

About this period George Gosling quitted Eton, and went to a German university; and, with the exception of a few weeks, during which he and Mildred did not meet, was not again in England until the decease of his father summoned him, at the age of twenty-two, to take possession of Gosling Graze and the oldest baronetcy in Britain.

Prepared as George was to find his little wife grown into a lovely woman, he was absolutely startled by her excessive beauty, and scarcely less so by the extraordinary facility with which she seemed to have acquired accomplishments not often perfected in an ordinary lifetime. Her governess, Mrs. Lofthouse, had managed, with excellent tact, to win the child's love and confidence from the outset, and, becoming warmly interested in the beautiful but undisciplined little genius that had come under her care, laboured so successfully to develop her singular gifts, that when, at the end of four years, the young lady, duly completed, made her entry into society, she at once carried it by storm.

George Gosling, returning to England just as Miss Mulcaster made her triumphant sally from the ambush of Mrs. Lofthouse's, hastily enrolled himself among her slaves, and, skilfully using the opportunities afforded at certain seasons by the vicinity of the country residences, soon distanced his many competitors, and became an affianced husband.

It was an unwise proceeding of the rejected lover, as he rode mournfully under the yellowing trees, to trace back this history. Before it was half finished, his stolid resignation had melted quite away. "Not win her, after all? And who—*who*, then——" He looked round, as if to assure himself that he was not riding in a dream. Not so happy. There were the familiar paths and trees. He passed the famous larch-tree, pride of The Haie, one hundred and thirty feet from crest to root.

"Steadfast old boy!" said George, giving it an envious lash with his whip as he passed. "Quiet, jade," to his startled mare. "*Will*

you dance? Ho, then, for a rattling gallop! Ho for a frantic leap! Going—going to be married!" he shouted, waving his hat in the air as his mare bounded forward. "But ho, the bride! Where's my bride? Hurrah, my ladies! Who will be Dame Gosling? Stay—I have it. I will have my fancies—my caprices, too. Home—home! And, as I am a living man, the first woman I speak with—marriageable and consenting—shall be my wife! I swear it—I swear it. Yes, by this living face of nature." He pulled up, took off his hat, and turned his excited face to the sky. "And may my pledge, if broken, bear the penalty of a violated oath! I will ride home, and the first woman I meet shall be my wife. Conditioned always"—his heart gave a half-hopeful thrill—"that *she* will not relent. And, by Heaven, I will put that to the issue!"

The next moment he had wheeled his horse, and was speeding towards The Haie. As fortune would have it, Mildred was coming out, flower-basket and scissors in hand. Gravity—a rare visitant—always became Mildred. She was grave now, and when, as George, dismounting and leading his horse, came to meet her, she lifted up her violet eyes with not well-pleased astonishment, the young man thought he had never till that moment fully realised the true character of her loveliness.

"Returned?" she said, the smooth brow slightly contracting, but expanding again, as she noticed his agitated face. "Heavens, what is the matter?"

"You ask that!" said George, bitterly. Then he added: "Miss Mulcaster, I have returned to tell you what I have already done in acquiescence with your decision. In losing you, I lose all that constitutes the worth of human affection. Henceforth, it is a matter of indifference to me what objects cross me, or associate their interests with mine. So, listen; you who, for two years, owned yourself my affianced wife. My heart, Mildred, recognises no degrees of content. If you will not be my wife, all women are the same to me. I have sworn, in the face of Heaven, that, if you persist in this destruction of my hopes, I will return by the way I came, and take to wife the first woman I may see—no matter of what station—willing to accept what you have cast away."

Mildred gazed at him for a moment, as if considering whether he were in jest or not. Then she burst into a silvery laugh, and clapped her little hands, like a pleased child.

"An excellent idea! George, George—what a romance it would make! May I tell mamma?"

"You do not believe me, then?" said the young man, with heightened colour.

Mildred's manner changed:

"Believe that you would so far forget what is due to yourself, your friends, your renowned ancestors, of whom you are so proud—believe that, had you actually formed a resolution so preposterous, you would have been guilty of the additional folly of using it against me, as a weapon of insult and menace?"

"Farewell, Miss Mulcaster," said George. And he rode away.

When Mrs. Mulcaster and her younger daughter returned from their drive, they perceived at a glance that something had ruffled the tranquillity of the spoiled sovereign; and, by dint of respectful cross-examination, at length elicited the startling truth. George was dismissed! George—the old playmate, friend, accepted suitor, betrothed husband—banished to the Siberia of distant civility, without hope of recall!

Perhaps, for the first time in her life, Mrs. Mulcaster experienced a burning desire to box her darling's ears. The latter had never been at the pains to conceal her aversion to George's unlucky name, but none dreamed that it was so deeply rooted. Sacrifice an amiable, honourable man, whom she unquestionably liked (not to mention sixteen thousand a year!), for a name, a word! Dismiss the familiar George into the region of ordinary acquaintance—perhaps alienate him altogether—perhaps goad him into some foolish alliance, such as, in his passion, he had hinted at!

"Child, child!" cried Mrs. Mulcaster, breaking all allegiance, and wringing her hands in despair, "what—what have you done?"

The child evinced on this occasion a less imperious bearing, and made a far more feeble fight than might have been expected of her. Still, the necessity of defending her prerogative induced her to vindicate with some warmth her title—so long allowed—to do precisely as she pleased. She really could not understand the unprovoked attack thus made upon her, and by those from whom, of all others, she had a right to look for solace and support. Two to one (Louey had not opened her lips) was usually considered unfair odds, and, but for a sense of duty, she would decline a controversy conducted on such principles.

What was the duty? Why, the duty she owed her sex, which was that of her assailants, to check the proud pretensions, the cool self-sufficiency, of those who preferred their suit, just as if such a thing as refusal was not to be dreamed of.

Consented? Well, yes, in a manner, she had. But that was beside the question. She was saying, when interrupted by clamour, or was going to say, that really any young lady who, at her own expense, administered a wholesome rebuke to such pretenders, deserved well of her sex, her country, and her family, not, at all events, to be chidden like an infant by those to whom she fled for succour—for succour—succour in her mis-misery—concluding with a burst of tears, which completed the business, and caused the much-injured beauty to be soothed, entreated, idolised, for the rest of the day.

Speculation now set in.

"But whom," resumed Mrs. Mulcaster, "can George marry? Suppose him serious in this mad idea, it is the merest chance in the world that he should meet with any woman of respectable station before reaching home. Suppose it were a village-girl, gathering fagots! Imagine

a gipsy! You may laugh, but, take my word for it, George Gosling is the man, of all others, to adhere to a resolution once made, however intrinsically absurd. Ridicule would not deter him. His regard for a pledge, or promise of any kind, is almost fanatical. Let me see. At his own lodge, he's happily safe. There are only the old people. Sally Downey's gone to service. There would have been a chance for Sally! And she was a plump, rosy little woman. I've seen him chat and laugh with her."

"Perhaps," said Miss Louisa, unguardedly, "George recollected that Sally was the usual portress."

"He did nothing of the sort," said Mildred, decisively. "I wonder, Louey, you dare to make so unworthy a suggestion."

"It was a foolish observation, my love," said her mother. "Your sister, I am sure, already regrets having made it."

"No, I don't," said Louey, hardily.

"Hush, my dear. (Footstool nearer to your sister. So.) Now then, who is there at Gosling Graize?"

"No visitors at all," said Louisa. "As to the servants, if you can possibly allude to them, they're almost all oldish and—fattish—the cook enormous! Mrs. Mapes, the housekeeper, is laid up with rheumatism. But really, dearest mother, we may spare ourselves these grotesque conjectures. That George will do his best to keep his wicked vow, or whatever he chooses to call it, I think very probable. But his safety lies in the respect of those about him. Not one of the household would be so forgetful of all decency, so wanting in duty, as to regard such a proposal as anything more than a boyish jest!"

Mrs. Mulcaster coughed gently. She had seen something more of the world and its ways than her daughter. That look of manifest uneasiness provoked the petted Mildred.

"I do think, mamma—it is positively cruel in you!" she said, in a fretting tone.

"Cruel, dear? In me? To do what?"

"To make so much of such utter nonsense. You *must* see how it annoys me—yet you pursue the subject."

"Pursue, my dear! I did not say one word," pleaded poor Mrs. Mulcaster. "I appeal to Louey."

Louey came gallantly to the rescue.

"Mamma said nothing, Mildred. It was I."

"I am obliged, Louisa, by your flat contradiction," said Mildred, with dignity. "But I never said mamma *had* spoken. Her looks, however, were eloquent—and I repeat—"

"Mildred, Mildred," said her mother, "this is too bad. Is it not, Louisa?"

"It is unkind and unfair," said the latter, warmly, "and I—"

Mildred burst into tears.

"Louisa, Louisa!" exclaimed Mrs. Mulcaster, turning fiercely on her ally. "How dare you address your elder sister in that tone? Do, I beg, restrain that impetuosity of temper. There! Wipe the pretty eyes. Come, now—compose yourself. Hark, love! A visitor!"

Mildred started, and became composed.

A few moments, and Colonel Lugard was announced. He had been taking his evening ride, and, as was his frequent wont, dropped in for a chat with his fair neighbours.

In the course of conversation, the colonel observed:

"By-the-by, I have had what I might almost call an adventure! I was cantering up to the Graize, to have a word with Gosling. Good fellow, George. Rides capitably to hounds. I wish he'd take them himself, out of the hands of that more horse-jockey, Screwtop! As I was saying, I was riding up the park, when my horse made a furious swerve. It needed the old dragoon grip, to avoid measuring my length on George's turf, so startled was my usually steady old hunter at what he had seen. And what do you think it was? A young lady, Miss Mulcaster. Yes, Miss Louisa—a beautiful young lady! We had come suddenly upon her, seated between two trees, and either her surprising beauty, or else a scarlet thing that covered her head and shoulders, had thrown my horse into the consternation I have described. I had managed to drop my whip in the manœuvre; but even before my groom, Will Crooke, could ride up, the young lady had stepped gracefully forward, and placed it in my hand. Her hood fell back as she did so—and, by Jove!" The colonel stopped, as if quite overcome by the remembrance.

"Who upon earth could she be?" said Mrs. Mulcaster, looking at her daughters.

"Who indeed?" resumed the colonel. "She was plainly, nay, humbly dressed. I should call her of the cottage class, for I noticed that her hand, though well-shapen, and critically clean, was not especially white, as if it had not disdained rough work. Her manner, however, was perfect. A precious old churl she must have thought me; for, so much was I taken aback by her singular beauty, that I merely clutched my whip, grunted, and jogged on. I wish I had stopped. I wish I'd gone back. If Will Crooke hadn't been behind me, I think I should."

"Very well, colonel," said Mrs. Mulcaster. "I am coming to call upon Mrs. Lugard tomorrow, and it will be my painful but imperative duty to place her on her guard."

"It will be a most neighbourly precaution," replied the gay veteran; "and, in order to assist your admirable scheme for the promotion of domestic harmony at Brambridge, I give you authority to add, that it is my fixed resolve to find out, by hook or—more probably—by Crooke, who this damsel is."

"Did you see Geo—Sir George Gosling?" asked the lady of the house.

"I did not see Sir George Gosling, my dear lady. They told me he had ridden over hither, and would possibly not return to dinner. I thought it *quite* possible," added the colonel, with a sly glance at Mildred.

Shortly thereafter the visitor took his leave.

Mrs. Mulcaster, who had been watching her eldest born with stealthy solicitude, now sat

down beside her on the sofa, and took her passive hand.

"How pale you look, my own darling!" she began. "That wicked George! I declare I cannot forgive him. Vexing my pretty rose."

"I am going to bed," responded the flower addressed. "Come up to me, some of you, in two hours, and see if I require anything. Knock softly, and, if I don't answer, go away."

And her majesty withdrew.

But she did not go to bed. Mildred sat looking in her glass for half an hour. It was a habit she had, holding these tête-à-têtes with herself. Howsoever, on this occasion, the parties did not agree. She rose pettishly, went to the window, and leaned forth. Restless and out of sorts as she was, the calm face of nature, preparing for repose, seemed to rebuke with its serenity the selfish passions that seethed within her perplexed bosom. Conscience, suddenly awaking, began, in accents stern and inexorable—more distinct, as it seemed, in the vesper-hush—to accuse her in such wise, that her wilful heart gave way. She began, culprit-like, to palliate her doings.

"I was mad," she found herself murmuring, as in miserable extenuation. "I was not mistress of myself. The resolution came"—(from the days of Eve temptation has always "come")—"on the sudden. If I had reflected—reasoned. But I never *can* reflect. Besides," she continued, gaining courage in her self-vindication, "I am not *sure* that, after all, I was so very wrong. Gosling! Lady Gosling! Too absurd! Perhaps I expected that he would have reasoned with me. I think I remember being angry that he didn't. Then, to be threatened! Stay, though, *did* he threaten? Good Heaven! if he should do it! Who can this girl be, cast in his way at this unhappy moment? What shall I do? What *can* be done? Fool that I have been! false to my word, to my peace; for now I *know* that I loved him, and, in refusing him for his detestable name, I have but proved myself a truer Gosling than he!"

With something between a giggle and a sob, the beautiful head sank down, and the voice lost itself in genuine tears.

When the obedient Louisa, followed by a maid bearing tea and other restoratives, came as commanded to her sister's chamber, a startling change had come over the spoiled one. She was affable, not to say humble, thanked and caressed her sister, as she had not done since their school-days—sent her love and duty to dearest mamma (who received the latter consignment, at all events, with profound astonishment), declared she was well, better, in fact, than usual—and begged to be left quite alone.

CHAPTER II.

GOSLING GRAIZE had been all that day, since the meridian, in a considerable stir. Mrs. Turnover, the cook, had received an unexpected visit from her niece, Esther Vann, a young lady holding the lucrative post of unremunerated

nursery-governess, in a poor but respectable family, some few miles distant.

Esther was little more than seventeen, but had, like Bellario's representative, a mind "more elder than her years." A richer rosebud than Esther never brightened a cottage-garden. What might have fallen to Esther's lot, had she been born in a higher station, we cannot say. As it was, she merely won all the hearts with which the course of a quiet humble existence brought her in contact. She had known no schooling, beyond what was attainable in her native village; all she knew beside, and that was not a little, being due to self-education and industry.

Esther was already known at the Graize, and her unlooked-for appearance, at a moment, too, when the master's absence left everybody more at liberty, created a complete jubilee; all the domestics, save Mrs. Mapes, the housekeeper, who was an invalid, vying with each other to make welcome their bright young visitor.

"If ever I see such a blessed creetur in my life!" said Dolly, the dairymaid. "She have no more pride than my hold slipper!"

Certainly, the object in question—frayed at the edges, cracked in the sole, and exhibiting an orifice at the toe—could have small excuse for the vice referred to.

"She's well enough, for the matter of *that*," said Mrs. Turnover, with affected indifference.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said Gertrude Cornish, the housemaid, "but I don't think you're as proud as you justly ought to be. Being as she howes to *you* her tiptop dedication—which she's fit to kip a school herself—why, you ought to be double proud of such a consequence."

"I done my best for to putt her in the way," said Mrs. Turnover, modestly, "but she 'ave 'elped herself wonderful since. So I thought it were better for to let her alone."

"S'pose she'll marry soon, and stock a dairy-farm," observed Dolly, to whom this was the very climax of ambitious hope.

"She might have married a doctor," said Mrs. Turnover, "but I wouldn't hear on it. An 'eetic, sick young man, and hadn't no patients but himself, which, my dear, it didn't pay."

"A doctor!" cried Gertrude. "She might marry a duke! Werry likely *will*."

The hardihood of this prophecy almost took away Mrs. Turnover's breath, but, recovering, she proposed that, master being absent, they should adjourn to the great hall, there to meet her niece, on the latter's return from a ramble in the woods, in order to show her the family pictures adorning that apartment.

Almost as they entered it, the pretty girl, fresh and rosy from her scamper, made her appearance, and told them of her meeting with Colonel Lugard. They then proceeded to examine the hall, which contained, besides the pictures, many family relics, some fine suits of armour, and other objects of interest.

"What werry broad toes they seem to 'ave 'ad in those days!" remarked Dolly, examining one of the suits.

"S'pose wearin' harmour giv' bunions," was the conjecture of Mrs. Turnover.

Esther suggested that, as steel and stockings might not act comfortably together, it was not impossible room was allowed for the intervention of a shoe.

"Harmour's wuss than nothin' at all, now-a-days," observed the cook. "Cannons, guns, and pistils does it; don't they, Esther?"

Miss Vann responded that, in her opinion, a gentleman provided with a light field-piece, a rifle, and a revolver, might prove a troublesome opponent, even for a human iron-clad.

Mrs. Turnover, who was of full habit, though hardly, as Miss Mulcaster had affirmed, "enormous," now took a little repose in an arm-chair, after which the party proceeded to inspect the pictures, Mrs. Turnover continuing her services as cicerone.

"Sir 'Ildebrand de Gosling, 1423'—that is, it *were* him, but he's rubbed out, all but his dog," said the guide.

"Law! what a pity!" said Dolly.

"Which, Mrs. Mapes told me, it on'y makes him the more valuable," continued Mrs. Turnover. "'Leftenant-General Sir Hedered Gosling, twelfth barrownight.' Wasn't *he* a 'ansum man?"

"Why is he a-turnin' of his back to the fightin'?" asked the captious critic, Dolly. "That ain't like a soldier."

Esther hinted that the artist might have experienced some difficulty in arranging that the general should, at one and the same time, give his attention to the battle, and his face to the observer.

"Sir Gilbert Gosling, banker and citizen," announced their guide. "Rayther a fat 'un."

"'Thrice Lord Mayor of London,' which explains the phenomenon," said Esther, laughing, and exhibiting two dimples which lay in ambush in her rosy cheeks.

"And now we comes to the ladies," resumed Mrs. Turnover. "'Dame Winifred Dorothea de Gosling.' 'Miss Halietha Gosling.' I've heard say thisiss was the beauty of the hase, warn't never married, lived single all her life, and died a old maid."

Dolly sighed. The cook's way of putting it gave the calamity treble force.

"Poor young creetur! and she so pretty! Cut off in her prime!"

"'Died 1703, at 92,'" read the cook. "Well, that ain't so wonderful! Eat at ninety-two? Stop, though. What's 'etat,' Esther?"

Her niece was absorbed in contemplation of a portrait at another part of the hall; but she heard, and answered the appeal.

"'Aged,' dear."

"Come, that wan't so bad," said Mrs. Turnover. "If she couldn't get a husband in ninety year, it wan't worth trying no longer, so my lady giv' in."

"I shouldn't like to die an old maid," observed Dolly. "Should *you*, ma'am?"

"Being a widow, I can't be expected to realise anything so frightful, you see," re-

sponded the lady addressed. "If you means to ast me, would I marry again? then I makes anser that I've turned it over in my mind—and my conclusion aire, I *would*. It was my dear husband's last wishes and words. 'Barbary,' he ses, squeedgin' my hand, 'I han't selfige, marry again—marry whensoever you're ast to. If you could make fifty men as 'appy as you've made me, why, make 'em. Don't marry a baker, nor don't ha' nothin' to say to a night-porter. Has to a pleasanman—cut'im dead. It makes unregular hours. To 'ave your husband breakfasting when you're at supper, and wisey-worsey, is far from comfortable. I should prefer my old perfession. Adoo,' which," added the good lady, wiping her eyes, "he were a haredresher."

"A *what*, ma'am?" asked Dolly.

"Cut and dressed 'air," explained Mrs. Turnover. "Yes, sich was his conclusive obserwatjuns" (Mr. Turnover's final remarks, as reported by his lady, might have filled a moderate volume), "and sich, ladies, is my feelins. I'm in no hurry, but if master marries anybody as isn't—isn't to my mind—as I'm very much afeerd indeed he will—then I don't mind sayin' that I should except the first respectful offer as is made me. Where's Esther got to?"

"What pictur's that, she's looking at so long?" asked the dairymaid.

Mrs. Turnover waddled a little way in the direction of her niece, and came back laughing.

"It's the pictur of master, took by Sir Philip's orders, three year ago. It was hung in that dark corner, 'cause it looked so new. She thinks it's one of them old Goslings. We won't tell her yet."

As they approached, the girl started from her reverie.

"Aunt, aunt, who was *this*? If ever there were a real hero Gosling, here he is! Tell me, tell me quickly, something about him. Soldier? Statesman? Poet? He *must* have been one of these. What a brow! And oh, what expression!" continued Esther, clasping her hands in a sort of rapture. "Dear, brave eyes! you look as if everything vile, pitiful, dishonest, must wither up before you! Aunt, look you, I would trust this man before the whole world. Look at that mouth, sweet, yet resolute. Strong will, too. I should not like to argue with *you*, Sir George de Gosling, if that be your name. For, in the first place, I know you would be in the right; and, in the second, that you would invariably get your way. If ever I loved man, it would be *you*!"

"My dear, my dear!" said Mrs. Turnover, hastily. "Remember, you are talking to a young gentleman!"

"To a young gentleman who flourished only five centuries ago," said Esther, smiling. And she pointed to a date "1370" scratched on the frame.

"That's master's mischief, now!" said Mrs.

Turnover, aside to Dolly. "I remember his saying he wouldn't be the only live 'un of the lot, and I see him, one day, scratching with his knife on the pictur-frame."

"That's the beauty of it, aunt," said the pretty Esther, saucily. "I can say just exactly what I please to this dear darling of my heart, and not be forward at all! I could, should, and would, have loved him, if I had flourished in his time. Do you hear *that*, sir? And, if he had loved me back, I would have been the most devoted wife that ever Gosling married. I do think he's smiling, as if he understood and believed it."

"What upon earth is the girl talking about?" began her perplexed aunt. But she was interrupted by an exclamation from the housemaid, who was at the window.

"Here's somebody galloping up the avenue!" answered the latter.

Mrs. Turnover waddled up.

"Gracious me, if it ain't master! Why, he said he shouldn't be home to dinner. Perhaps he's only rode back to dress—he do sometimes. Come along, Esther dear. La'! how he's a-tearin' along! Where's Mr. Fanshaw? Oh, he's out, I know. Gertrude, call William—or *you*, Dolly—quick!"

"William's run over to the village," said Dolly.

"Then Gertrude must stay and open the door," said the cook.

But Gertrude had disappeared.

"Dolly, Dolly! *You* must," said Mrs. Turnover.

"I! I dursent," said the shy dairymaid.

The horse's trampling was now heard, and presently a violent tug at the hall bell.

"What shall I do?" cried Mrs. Turnover. "Wherever are all the men?"

"Why not open the door yourself, dear?" suggested Esther, quietly.

"I can't do it, this figure," returned her aunt, struggling with her apron-strings. "*You* go, child." (Here there was another peal.) "Hark! What a flurry he be in!"

"I?" said Esther.

"Yes, you. 'Tis the 'riginal of the very pictur you was looking at. Master hisself."

"What?" ejaculated Esther, becoming scarlet. "But the—the date."

"*That* he done hisself."

"Aunt, do you call this a joke?" said Esther, hiding her burning face in her hands.

"Nonsense, dear! Run you and open the door."

"Not if he stood there till his feet grew into the stones," returned the girl, haughtily; and with the step of a queen she quitted the hall.

Mrs. Turnover opened the door.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

CHAPTER IX. TIDED OVER.

It was the fourth morning after George Dallas's arrival in Amherst, the day on which his mother had appointed by letter for him to go over to Poynings, and there receive that which was to set him free from the incubus of debt and difficulty which had so long oppressed him. An anticipation of pleasure crossed his mind so soon as he first opened his eyes; he soon remembered whence the satisfaction sprung, and on going to the window and looking out, he found that nature and he were once again in accord. As at the time of his misery she had worn her blackest garb, her direst expression, so now, when hope seemed to gleam upon him, did nature don her flowery robes and array herself in her brightest verdant sheen. Spring was rapidly ripening into summer; into the clean and comely little town, which itself was radiant with whitened door-steps, and newly painted woodwork, and polished brass fittings, came wafted delicious odours from outlying gardens and uplands, where the tossing grass went waving to and fro like the undulations of a restless sea, and in the midst of which the sturdy old farm-houses, dotted here and there, stood out like red-faced islands. Dust, which even the frequent April showers could not lay, was blowing in Amherst streets; blinds, which had been carefully laid by during the winter (the Amherst mind had scarcely arrived at spring blinds for outside use, and contented itself with modest striped sacking, fastened between hooks on the shop fronts, and poles socketed into the pavement), were brought forth and hung up in all the glory of cleanliness. It was reported by those who had been early astrid, that Tom Leigh, the mail-cart driver, had been seen with his white hat on that morning, and any Amherstian who may have previously doubted whether the fine weather had actually arrived, must have been flinty-hearted and obdurate indeed not to have accepted that assurance.

The sunshine and the general brightness of the day had its due effect on George Dallas, who was young, for a nineteenth-century man

almost romantic, and certainly impressible. His spirits rose within him, as, his breakfast finished, he started off to walk to Poynings. Drinking in the loveliness of the broad sun-steeped landscape, the sweet odours coming towards him on the soft breeze, the pleasant sound, were it chink of blacksmith's hammer, or hum of bees, or voice of cuckoo hidden deep in distant bright-leaved woods, the young man for a time forgot his baser associations and seemed to rise, in the surroundings of the moment, to a better and purer frame of mind than he had known for many years. Natural, under such circumstances, was the first turning of his thoughts to his mother, to whose deep love and self-sacrifice he was indebted for the freedom which at length was about to be his. In his worst times there had been one bright spot of love for her in all the black folly of his life, and now the recollection of her disinterestedness and long suffering on his behalf made her as purely dear to him as when, in the old days that seemed so long ago, he had said his prayers at her knee. He recollected walking with her in their garden on mornings like these, when they were all in all to each other, soon after his father's death, when that chastening memory was on them both, and before there was any thought of Mr. Carruthers or his niece—or his niece!—and straightway off went his thoughts into a different channel. What a pretty girl! so soft and quiet, so fresh withal, and frank, and guileless, so different to—Well, he didn't know; with similar advantages Harriet might have been very much the same. But Miss Carruthers was certainly specially charming; the talk which they had had together showed that. The talk which they had together? Was he not entering her own domain? What if she were to meet and recognise him there? That would spoil all their plans. A word from her would—oh no! Though Mrs. Carruthers might not have been intended as a conspirator by nature, George felt by his recent experience of his mother's movements that she would have sufficient foresight to prevent Clare from leaving the house just at that time, lest she might discover the rendezvous in the shrubbery. The tact that had so rapidly shifted the venue of their last meeting from the bustle of the draper's to the calm solitude of the dentist's would assuredly be sufficient to prevent a young girl from intruding on their next appointment.

Busy with these thoughts, and ever and anon pausing to look round him at the fair scenes through which he was passing, George Dallas pursued his way along the high road until he gained the summit of the little hill whence is obtained the first view of Poynings and its grounds. There he stopped suddenly; from that point he had always intended to reconnoitre, but he had never anticipated seeing what he did see—a carriage driving through the open lodge gates, and in the carriage reclining at his ease no less a person than Mr. Capel Carruthers. It was he, not a doubt about it, in the respectability of his glossy broad-brimmed hat, in his white whiskers, in his close-fitting dogskin gloves, in the very double-gold eyeglass with which he was looking at nature in a very patronising manner. Even if he had not been short-sighted, Mr. Carruthers was at such a distance as would utterly have prevented him from recognising any one on the top of the hill; but George Dallas no sooner saw him than instinctively he crouched down by the hedge-side and waited until the carriage was rolling down the avenue; then he slowly raised himself, muttering:

"What the deuce has brought him back just now? confound him! What on earth will she do? It's most infernally provoking, just at this very nick of time; he might have kept off a few hours longer. She won't come to the shrubbery now; she's frightened out of her life at that old ruffian, and, by George, I shall be put off again! After all I've said to Routh, after all the castles in the air which I've been building on the chance of getting free, I shall have to slink back to town empty-handed!" He was leaning over a gate in the hedge, and as he spoke he shook his fist at the unconscious county magistrate, visible in the distance now but by the crown of his hat. "Except," continued George, "knowing how deeply I'm involved, she'll risk all hazards and come to the shrubbery. Perhaps she's started now, not expecting him, and when he reaches the house and doesn't find her there—he's always hanging on her trail, curse him!—he will make inquiries and follow her. That would be worst of all, for not only should I miss what she promised me, but she would come to grief herself, poor darling. Well, I must chance it, whatever happens."

He turned down a by-lane which ran at right angles to the avenue, pursuing which he came upon a low park paling enclosing the shrubbery. Carefully looking round him, and finding no one within sight, he climbed the paling, and dropped noiselessly upon the primrose-decked bank on the other side. All quiet; nothing moving but the birds darting in and out among the bright green trees, and the grasshoppers in myriads round his feet. The walk had tired him, and he lay down on the mossy turf and awaited his mother's coming. Mossy turf, soft and sweet-smelling, the loud carol of the birds, the pleasant, soothing, slumberous sound of the trees bending gently towards each other as the mild air rustled

in the leaves. It was long since he had experienced these influences, but he was now under their spell. What did they real? Boyhood's days; the Bishop's Wood, where they went birds'-nesting; Duke Primus, who won "stick-ups," and was the cock of the school, and Charley Cope, who used to tell such good stories in bed, and Bergemann, a German boy, who was drowned in a pond in just such a part of the wood as this, and—twelve o'clock rings sharply out from the turret clock in Poynings stables, and at its sound away fly the ghosts of the past. Twelve o'clock, the time appointed in his mother's letter for him to meet her in that very spot. He rose up from the turf, and sheltering himself behind the broad trunk of an old tree, looked anxiously in the direction of the house. No human being was to be seen; a few rabbits whisked noiselessly about, their little white tails gleaming as they disappeared in the brushwood, but they and the birds and the grasshoppers comprised all the life about the place. He looked on the big trees and the chequered shade between them, and the glimpses of blue skylight between their topmost boughs; he left his vantage ground and strode listlessly to and fro; the quarter chime rung out from the turret, then the half hour, and still no one came.

Some one coming at last! George Dallas's quick eyes make out a female figure in the far distance, not his mother, though. This woman's back is bowed, her step slow and hesitating, unlike Mrs. Carruthers, on whose matronly beauty Time has as yet laid his gentlest touch. He must stand aside, he thought, amongst the trees until the new comer had passed by; but as the woman approached, her gait and figure seemed familiar to him, and when she raised her head and looked round her as though expecting some one, he recognised Nurse Brookers. The old woman gave a suppressed scream as George Dallas stepped out from among the trees and stood before her.

"I could not help it, George," said she; "I could not help it, though I was looking for and expecting you at that moment, and that's more than you were doing for me, isn't it? You were expecting some one else, my boy?"

"Is anything the matter? Is she ill? Has her husband found out?"

"Nothing! She's—well, as well as may be, poor dear, and——"

"Then she hasn't been able to do what she promised?"

"Oh, George, George, did you ever know her fail in doing what she promised, from the days when you were a baby until now? Better for her, poor thing, as I've often told her, if she hadn't——"

"Yes, yes, nurse, I know all about that, of course; but why isn't she here now?"

"She daren't come, George. Master's come home unexpected, and he and Miss Clare are with her, and there is no chance for her to make an excuse to get away. So she just runs into her dressing-room for a minute,

and sends to me—she always sends to me in her troubles, as you've seen many a time and oft, Master George—and tells me, she says, 'Take this and go into the shrubbery, and tell George,' she says, 'why I couldn't come, and that I sent it him with my heart's love, and God bless him,' she says."

As the old woman spoke, she produced from her pocket a round flat parcel wrapped in writing-paper, which she handed to Dallas. He took it with a very weak attempt at unconcern (he did not know with how much of their secret his mother might have entrusted the old nurse), and thrust it into his breast-pocket, saying at the same time, "Thanks, nurse. That's all right. Did she say anything else?"

"Nothing, I think. Oh yes—that of course now you would not remain in the neighbourhood, and that you were to be sure to write to her, and send your address."

"She need not be afraid—I'm off at once! Good-bye, nurse. Tell my mother I'll hold to all I promised her. Thank her a thousand times, bless her! Good-bye, dear old woman; perhaps the next time we meet I shan't have to skulk in a wood when I want to see my mother!"

He pressed a hasty kiss on the old woman's upturned face, and hurried away. The last sound he had uttered seemed to have rekindled the old vindictive feeling in his mind, for as he strode away he muttered to himself: "Skulking in a wood, hiding behind trees—a pretty way for a son to seek his mother, and she never to come after all! Prevented by her fear of that pompous idiot, her husband. To think of her, such as I recollect her, being afraid of an empty-headed dotard. And yet he is kind to her. She said so herself—that's nothing; but Nurse Brookes said so too—that's something—that's everything. If he were not—if he treated her badly—he should rue it. But he is fond of her, and proud of her, as well he may be; and Clare, that charming girl, is his niece. Charming, indeed! Ah, Capel Carruthers, you have a wholesome horror of me, but you little know that two guardian angels plead for you!"

The sight of the park paling over which he had climbed into the shrubbery, and over which lay his only way out of it, seemed to change the tenor of his thoughts. He stopped at once, and looking cautiously round, stepped in among the trees, and drew from his breast the packet which Nurse Brookes had given to him. He tore off the outer covering of writing-paper, and carefully placed it in his pocket, then he came to a purple morocco case, which he opened, and there before him, set off by the velvet on which it lay, was the bracelet, a band of dead gold, set with splendid wreaths of forget-me-nots in diamonds and turquoises. George Dallas took it up and examined it attentively, weighed it in his hand, looked closely at the stones in various lights, then replaced it in its case, as a smile of satisfaction spread over his face.

"No mistake about that!" said he. "Even

I, all unaccustomed to such luxuries, know that this must be the right thing. She has sent it as she received it, in the very box, with the swell Bond-street jeweller's name and all! Not a bad notion of a present, Mr. Carruthers, by any means. You've money, sir; but, it must be owned, you've taste also. It's only to be hoped that you've not very sharp eyesight, or that you'll ever be tempted to make a very close inspection of the Palais Royal bijouterie which is doing duty for this in the jewel-box! These will set me clear with Routh, and leave me with a few pounds in my pocket besides, to begin life anew with. If it does that, and I can stick to my employment on The Mercury, and get a little more work somewhere else, and give up that infernal card-playing—that's the worst of it—I may yet make our friend C. C. believe I am not such a miserable scoundrel as he now imagines me!"

He replaced the case carefully in his breast-pocket, climbed the palings, and was once more on the high road, striding in the direction of Amherst. Ah, the castle-building, only occasionally interrupted by a return to the realities of life in squeezing the packet in his breast-pocket, which he indulged in during that walk! Free, with the chance and the power of making a name for himself in the world! free from all the debasing associations, free from Routh, from Harriet—from Harriet? Was that idea quite so congenial to his feelings? to be separated from Harriet, the only woman whom, in his idle dissipated days, he had ever regarded with anything like affection, the only woman who—and then the bright laughing face and the golden hair of Clare Carruthers rose before his mind. How lovely she was, how graceful and bred-looking, above all, how fresh and youthful, how unsullied by any contact with the world, with all the native instincts pure and original, with no taught captivations or society charms, nothing but—

"Yoho! Yoho!"

George Dallas started from his reverie at the repeated cry, and only just in time sprang from the middle of the road along which, immersed in thought, he had been plodding, as the mail-cart, with its red-faced driver, a sprig of lilac in his breast and a bunch of laburnum behind each ear of his horse, came charging full upon him. The driver was a man choleric by nature and with a great sense of his position as an important government officer, and he glared round at George and asked him a few rapid questions, in which the devil and his supposed residence were referred to with great volubility. Under less pleasant circumstances Dallas would probably have returned his greeting with interest; as it was, he merely laughed, and, waving his hand, proceeded on his way to the inn, whence, having paid his bill, he returned to London by the first train.

During the whole of the journey up to town the young man's thoughts were filled with his intentions for the future, and no sooner had the train stopped at London-bridge than he deter-

mined to go at once to The Mercury office and announce his readiness to undertake any amount of work. Accordingly he struck away across the Borough, and, crossing Blackfriars-bridge, dived among a mass of streets running at right angles with Fleet-street, until he arrived at a large, solemn, squat old building, over the door of which glimmered a lamp with the words "Mercury Office" in half-effaced characters. A smart pull at a sharp, round, big bell brought a preternaturally sharp boy to the door, who at once recognised the visitor and admitted him within the sacred precincts. Up a dark passage, up a steep and regular flight of stairs, George Dallas proceeded, until on the first floor he rapped at the door facing him, and, being bidden to come in, entered the editorial sanctum.

A large cheerless room, its floor covered with a ragged old Turkey carpet, on its walls two or three bookshelves crammed with books of reference, two or three maps, an old clock gravely ticking, and a begrimed bust, with its hair dust-powdered, and with layers of dust on its highly developed cheek-bones. In the middle of the room a battered old desk covered with blue books, letters opened and unopened, piles of manuscript under paper-weights, baskets with cards of invitation for all sorts of soirées, entertainments, and performances, and snake-like india-rubber tubes for communication with distant printing offices or reporters' rooms, a big leaden inkstand like a bath, and a sheaf of pens more or less dislocated. At this desk sat a tall man of about fifty, bald-headed, large-bearded, with sharp grey eyes, well-cut features, and good presence. This was Mr. Leigh, editor of The Mercury; a man who had been affiliated to the press from the time of his leaving college, who had been connected with nearly all the morning journals in one capacity or another, correspondent here, manager there, descriptive writer, leader-writer, critic, and scrub, and who, always rising, had been recommended by the Jupiter Tonans of the press, the editor of The Statesman, to fill the vacant editorial chair at The Mercury. A long-headed, far-seeing man, Grafton Leigh, bright as a diamond, and about as hard, keen as a sword in the hands of a fine fencer, and as difficult to turn aside, earnest, energetic, devoted to his work, and caring for nothing else in comparison—not even for his wife, then sound asleep in his little house in Brompton, or his boy working for his exhibition from Westminster. He looked up as George entered, and his features, tightly set, relaxed as he recognised the young man.

"You, Ward!" said he. "We didn't look for you till to-morrow night. What rush of industry, what sudden desire to distinguish yourself, has brought you here to-night, my boy?"

Before George could answer, a young man came forward from an inner room, and caught him by the hand.

"What Paul, old fellow, this is delicious! He must be brimming over with ideas, Chief, and has come down here to ventilate them."

"Not I," said George. "My dear Chief," addressing Leigh, "both you and Cunningham give me credit for more virtue than I possess. I merely looked in as I passed from the railway, to see how things were going on."

"This *is* a sell," said Mr. Cunningham. "I thought I had booked you. You see that confounded Shimmer has failed us again. He was to have done us a sensation leader on the murder——"

"The murder! What murder?"

"Oh, ah, I forgot; happened since you went away. Wapping or Rotherhithe—some water-side place—body found, and all that kind of thing! Shimmer was to have done us one of his stirrers, full of adjectives, denouncing the supineness of the police, and that kind of thing, and he's never turned up, and the Chief has kept me here to fill his place. Confounded nuisance! I'm obliged to fall back on my old subject—Regulation of the City Traffic!"

"I'm very sorry for you, Cunningham," said George, laughing; "but I can't help you to-night. I'm seedy and tired, and I know nothing about the murder, and want to get to bed. However, I came to tell the Chief that I'm his now and for ever, ready to do double tasks of work from to-morrow out."

"All right, Ward. So long as you don't overdo it, I shall always be delighted to have you with us," said Mr. Leigh. "Now get home to bed, for you look dog-tired." And George Dallas shook hands with each, and went away.

"Glad to hear we're going to have a good deal of work out of Ward, Chief," said Cunningham, when he and his editor were alone again. "He's deuced smart when he likes—as smart as Shimmer, and a great deal more polished and gentlemanly."

"Yes," said Grafton Leigh, "he's a decided catch for the paper. I don't think his health will last, though. Did you notice his manner to-night?—nerves agitated and twitching, like a man who had gone through some great excitement!"

CHAPTER X. DISPOSED OF.

It was very late when George Dallas arrived at Routh's lodgings in South Molton-street, so that he felt it necessary to announce his presence by a peculiar knock, known only to the initiated. He made the accustomed signal, but the door was not opened for so abnormally long an interval that he began to think he should have to go away, and defer the telling of the good news until the morning. He had knocked three times, and was about to turn away from the door, when it was noiselessly opened by Harriet herself. She held a shaded candle in her hand, which gave so imperfect a light that Dallas could hardly see her distinctly enough to feel certain that his first impression, that she was looking very pale and ill, was not an imagination induced by the dim light. She asked him to come into the sitting-room, and said she had just turned the gas out, and was going to bed.

"I am sorry to have disturbed you," he said,

when she had set down the candle on a table, without re-lighting the gas, "but I want to see Routh particularly. Is he in?"

"No," said Harriet, "he is not. Did you get his letter?"

"What letter? I have not heard from him. I have only just come up from Amherst. But you look ill, Mrs. Routh. Does anything ail you? Is anything wrong?"

"No," she said, hurriedly, "nothing, nothing. Routh has been worried, that's all, and I am very tired."

She pushed the candle further away as she spoke, and, placing her elbow on the table, rested her head on her hand. George looked at her with concern. He had a kind heart and great tenderness for women and children, and he could forget, or, at all events, lay aside his own anxieties in a moment at the sight of suffering in a woman's face. His look of anxious sympathy irritated Harriet; she moved uneasily and impatiently, and said almost harshly:

"Never mind my looks, Mr. Dallas; they don't matter. Tell me how you have sped on your errand at Poynings. Has your mother kept her promise? Have you got the money? I hope so, for I am sorry to say Stewart wants it badly, and has been reckoning on it eagerly. I can't imagine how it happened you did not get his letter."

"I have succeeded," said George. "My mother has kept her word, God bless her, and I came at once to tell Routh he can have the money."

He stopped in the full tide of his animated speech, and looked curiously at Harriet. Something in her manner struck him as being unusual. She was evidently anxious about the money, glad to see him, and yet oddly absent. She did not look at him, and while he spoke she had turned her head sharply once or twice, while her upraised eyelids and parted lips gave her face a fleeting expression of intense listening. She instantly noticed his observation of her, and said sharply:

"Well, pray go on; I am longing to hear your story."

"I thought you were listening to something; you looked as if you heard something," said George.

"So I am listening—to you," Harriet replied, with an attempt at a smile. "So I do hear your adventures. There's nobody up in the house but myself. Pray go on."

So George went on, and told her all that had befallen him at Amherst, with one important reservation; he said nothing of Clare Carruthers or his two meetings with the heiress at the Sycamores; but he told her all about his interview with his mother, and the expedient to which she had resorted to supply his wants. Harriet Routh listened to his story intently; but when she heard that he had received from Mrs. Carruthers, not money, but jewels, she was evidently disconcerted.

"Here is the bracelet," said George, as he took the little packet from the breast-pocket of

his coat, and handed it to her. "I don't know much about such things, Mrs. Routh, but perhaps you do. Are the diamonds very valuable?"

Harriet had opened the morocco case containing the bracelet while he was speaking, and now she lifted the beautiful ornament from its satin bed, and held it on her open palm.

"I am not a very capable judge," she said; "but I think these are fine and valuable diamonds. They are extremely beautiful." And a gleam of colour came into her white face as she looked at the gems with a woman's irrepressible admiration of such things.

"I can't tell you how much I feel taking them from her," said George. "It's like a robbery, isn't it?" And he looked full and earnestly at Harriet.

She started, let the bracelet fall, stooped to pick it up, and as she raised her face again, it was whiter than before.

"How can you talk such nonsense?" she said, with a sudden resumption of her usual captivating manner. "Of course it isn't. Do you suppose your mother ever had as much pleasure in these gewgaws in her life as she had in giving them to you? Besides, you know you're going to reform and be steady, and take good advice, are you not?" She watched him very keenly, though her tone was gay and trifling. George reddened, laughed awkwardly, and replied:

"Well, I hope so; and the first step, you know, is to pay my debts. So I must get Routh to put me in the way of selling this bracelet at once. I suppose there's no difficulty about it. I'm sure I have heard it said that diamonds are the same as ready money, and the sooner the tin is in Routh's pocket the better pleased I'll be. None the less obliged to him, though, Mrs. Routh; remember that, both for getting me out of the scrape, and for waiting so long and so good-humouredly for his money."

For all the cordiality of his tone, for all the gratitude he expressed, Harriet felt in her inmost heart, and told herself she felt, that he was a changed man; that he felt his freedom, rejoiced in it, and did not mean again to relinquish or endanger it.

"The thing he feared has happened," she thought, while her small white fingers were busy with the jewels. "The very thing he feared. This man must be got away—how am I to do it?"

The solitary candle was burning dimly; the room was dull, cold, and gloomy. George looked round, and was apparently thinking of taking his leave, when Harriet said:

"I have not told you how opportune your getting this money—for I count it as money—is. Stay; let me light the gas. Sit down there opposite to me, and you shall hear how things have gone with us since you went away." She had thrown off the abstraction of her manner, and in a moment she lighted the gas, put the extinguished candle out of sight, set wine upon the table, and pulled a comfortable arm-chair forward, in which she begged George to seat

himself. "Take off your coat," she said; and he obeyed her, telling her, with a laugh, as he flung it upon a chair, that there was a small parcel of soiled linen in the pocket.

"I did not expect to have to stay at Amherst, so I took no clothes with me," he explained, "and had to buy a shirt and a pair of stockings for Sunday, so as not to scandalise the natives. Rather an odd place to replenish one's wardrobe, by-the-by."

Harriet looked sharply at the coat, and, passing the chair on which it lay on her way to her own, felt its texture with a furtive touch. Then she sat down, gave Dallas wine, and once more fell to examining the bracelet. It might have occurred to any other man in George's position that it was rather an odd proceeding on the part of Mrs. Routh to keep him there at so late an hour with no apparent purpose, and without any expressed expectation of Routh's return; but George seldom troubled himself with reflections upon anybody's conduct, and invariably followed Harriet's lead without thinking about it at all. Recent events had shaken Routh's influence, and changed the young man's views and tastes, but Harriet still occupied her former place in his regard and in his habit of life, which in such cases as his signifies much. With a confidential air she now talked to him, her busy fingers twisting the bracelet as she spoke, her pale face turned to him, but her eyes somewhat averted. She told him that Routh had been surprised and annoyed at his (Dallas) being so long away from town, and had written to him, to tell him that he had been so pressed for money, so worried by duns, and so hampered by the slow proceedings of the company connected with the new speculation, that he had been obliged to go away, and must keep away, until Dallas could let him have one hundred and forty pounds. George was concerned to hear all this, and found it hard to reconcile with the good spirits in which Routh had been when he had seen him last; but he really knew so little of the man's affairs beyond having a general notion that they were hopelessly complicated, and subject to volcanic action of an utterly disconcerting nature, that he regarded his own surprise as unreasonable, and forbore to express it.

"It is of the utmost importance to Stewart to have the money at once," Harriet continued. "You see that, yourself; he told you all in his letter."

"Very extraordinary it should have been lost! Directed to P. O., Amherst, of course? I wish I had got it, Mrs. Routh; I'd have gone at once and sold the bracelet before I came to you at all, and brought the money. But I can do it early in the morning, can't I? I can take it to some good jeweller and get cash for it, and be here by twelve o'clock, so as not to keep Routh a moment longer than I need in suspense. Will a hundred and forty square him for the present, Mrs. Routh? I'm sure to get more for the bracelet—don't you think so?—and of course he can have it all, if he wants it."

The young man spoke in an eager tone, and the woman listened with a swelling heart. Her full red lip trembled for a passing instant—consideration for—kindness to the only human creature she loved touched Harriet as nothing besides had power to touch her.

"I am sure the bracelet is worth more than that sum," she said; "it is worth more than two hundred pounds, I dare say. But you forget, Mr. Dallas, that you must not be too precipitate in this matter. It is of immense importance to Stewart to have this money, but there are precautions to be taken."

"Precautions, Mrs. Routh! what precautions? The bracelet's my own, isn't it, and principally valuable because there's no bother about selling a thing of the kind?"

She looked at him keenly; she was calculating to what extent she might manage him, how far he would implicitly believe her statements, and rely upon her judgment. His countenance was eminently reassuring, so she went on:

"Certainly the bracelet is your own, and it could be easily sold, were you only to consider yourself, but you have your mother to consider."

"My mother! How? when she has parted with the bracelet on purpose."

"True," said Harriet; "but perhaps you are not aware that diamonds, of anything like the value of these, are as well known, their owners, buyers, and whereabouts, as blood horses, their pedigrees, and purchasers. I think it would be unsafe for you to sell this bracelet in London; you may be sure the diamonds would be known by any jeweller on whose respectability you could sufficiently rely, to sell the jewels to him. It would be very unpleasant, and of course very dangerous to your mother, if the diamonds were known to be those purchased by Mr. Carruthers, and a cautious jeweller thought proper to ask him any questions."

George looked grave and troubled, as Harriet put these objections to his doing as he had proposed, for the immediate relief of Routh, clearly before him. He never for a moment doubted the accuracy of her information, and the soundness of her fears.

"I understand," he said; "but what can I do? I must sell the bracelet to get the money, and sooner or later will make no difference in the risk you speak of; but it may make all the difference to Routh. I can't, I won't delay in this matter; don't ask me, Mrs. Routh. It is very generous of you to think of my risk, but—"

"It is not your risk," she interrupted him by saying, "it is your mother's. If it were your own, I might let you take it, for Stewart's sake"—an indefinable compassion was in the woman's face, an unwonted softness in her blue eyes—"but your mother has done and suffered much for you, and she must be protected, even if Stewart has to lie hidden a day or two longer. You must not do any thing rash. I think I know what would be the best thing for you to do."

"Tell me, Mrs. Routh," said George, who highly appreciated the delicate consideration for

his mother which inspired Harriet's misgivings. "Tell me, and whatever it is, I will do it."

"It is this," said Harriet; "I know there is a large trade in diamonds at Amsterdam, and that the merchants there, chiefly Jews, deal in the loose stones, and are not, in our sense, jewellers. You could dispose of the diamonds there without suspicion or difficulty; it is the common resort of people who have diamonds to sell—London is not. If you would go there at once, you might sell the diamonds, and send the money to Stewart, or rather to me, to an address we would decide upon, without more than the delay of a couple of days. Is there anything to keep you in town?"

"No," said George, "nothing. I could start this minute, as far as any business I've got to do is concerned."

Harriet drew a long breath, and her colour rose.

"I wish you would, Mr. Dallas," she said, earnestly. "I hardly like to urge you, it seems so selfish; and Stewart, if he were here, would make so much lighter of the difficulty he is in than I can bring myself to do, but you don't know how grateful I should be to you if you would."

The pleading earnestness of her tone, the eager entreaty in her eyes, impressed George painfully; he hastened to assure her that he would accede to any request of hers.

"I am so wretched when he is away from me, Mr. Dallas," said Harriet; "I am so lonely and full of dread. Anything not involving you or your mother in risk, which would shorten the time of his absence, would be an unspeakable boon to me."

"Then of course I will go at once, Mrs. Routh," said George. "I will go to-morrow. I am sure you are quite right, and Amsterdam's the place to do the trick at. I wish I could have seen Routh first, for a moment, but as I can't, I can't. Let me see. Amsterdam. There's a boat to Rotterdam by the river, and—oh, by Jove! here's a Bradshaw; let's see when the next goes."

He walked to the little sideboard, and selected the above-named compendium of useful knowledge from a mass of periodicals, circulars, bills, and prospectuses of companies immediately to be brought out, and offering unheard-of advantages to the investors.

The moment his eyes were turned away from her, a fierce impatience betrayed itself in Harriet's face, and as he sat slowly turning over the sibylline leaves, and consulting the incomprehensible and maddening index, she pressed her clasped hands against her knees, as though it were almost impossible to resist the impulse which prompted her to tear the book from his dilatory fingers.

"Here it is," said George, at length, "and uncommonly cheap, too. The Argus for Rotterdam, seven A.M. That's rather early, though, isn't it? To-morrow morning, too, or rather this morning, for it's close upon one now. Let's see when the Argus, or some other boat, goes

next. H'm; not till Thursday at the same hour. That's rather far off."

Harriet was breathing quickly, and her face was quite white, but she sat still and controlled her agony of anxiety. "I have urged him as strongly as I dare," she thought; "fate must do the rest."

Fate did the rest.

"After all, I may as well go at seven in the morning, Mrs. Routh. All my things are packed up already, and it will give me a good start. I might get my business done before Wednesday night, almost, if I'm quick about it; at all events, early the following day."

"You might, indeed," said Harriet, in a faint voice.

"There's one little drawback, though, to that scheme," said Dallas. "I haven't the money. They owe me a trifle at The Mercury, and I shall have to wait till to-morrow and get it, and go by Ostend, the swell route. I can't go without it, that's clear."

Harriet looked at him with a wan blank face, in which there was something of weariness, and under it something of menace, but her tone was quite amiable and obliging as she said:

"I think it is a pity to incur both delay and expense by waiting. I have always a little ready money by me, in case of our having to make a move suddenly, or of an illness, or one of the many contingencies which men never think of, and women never forget. You can have it with pleasure. You can return it to me," she said, with a forced smile, "when you send Routh the hundred and forty."

"Thank you," said Dallas. "I shan't mind taking it from you for a day or two, as it is to send help to Routh the sooner. Then I'll go, that's settled, and I had better leave you, for you were tired when I came in, and you must be still more tired now. I shall get back from Amsterdam as quickly as I can, tell Routh, but I see my way to making a few pounds out of the place. They want padding at The Mercury, and I shan't come back by return of post." He had risen now, and had extended his hand towards the bracelet, which lay in its open case on the table.

A sudden thought struck Harriet.

"Stop," she said; "I don't think it would do to offer this bracelet in its present shape, anywhere. The form and the setting are too remarkable. It would probably be re-sold entire, and it is impossible to say what harm might come of its being recognised. It must be taken to pieces, and you must offer the diamonds separately for sale. It will make no appreciable difference in the money you will receive, for such work as this is like bookbinding—dear to buy, but never counted in the price when you want to sell."

"What am I to do, then?" asked George, in a dismayed tone. "I could not take out the diamonds, you know; they are firmly set—see here." He turned the gold band inside out, and showed her the plain flat surface at the back of the diamonds and turquoises.

"Wait a moment," said Harriet. "I think I can assist you in this respect. Do you study the bracelet a bit until I come to you."

She left the room, and remained away for a little time. Dallas stood close by the table, having lowered the gas-burners, and by their light he closely inspected the rivets, the fastenings, and the general form of the splendid ornament he was so anxious to get rid of, idly thinking how well it must have looked on his mother's still beautiful arm, and wondering whether she was likely soon to be obliged to wear the counterfeit. His back was turned to the door by which Harriet had left the room, so that, when she came softly to the aperture again, he did not perceive her. She carefully noted his attitude, and glided softly in, carrying several small implements in her right hand, and in her left held cautiously behind her back a coat, which she dexterously dropped upon the floor quite unperceived by Dallas, behind the chair on which he had thrown his. She then went up to the table, and showed him a small pair of nippers, a pair of scissors of peculiar form, and a little implement, with which she told him workers in jewellery loosened stones in their setting, and punched them out. Dallas looked with some surprise at the collection, regarding them as unusual items of a lady's paraphernalia, and said, gaily:

"You are truly a woman of resources, Mrs. Routh. Who would ever have thought of your having all those things ready at a moment's notice?"

Harriet made no reply, but she could not quite conceal the disconcerting effect of his words.

"If I have made a blunder in this," she thought, "it is a serious one, but I have more to do, and must not think yet."

She sat down, cleared a space on the table, placed the bracelet and the little tools before her, and set to work at once at her task of demolition. It was a long one, and the sight was pitiful as she placed jewel after jewel carefully in a small box before her, and proceeded to loosen one after another. Sometimes George took the bracelet from her and aided her, but the greater part of the work was done by her. The face bent over the disfigured gold and maltreated gems was a remarkable one in its mingled expression of intentness and absence; her will was animating her fingers in their task, but her mind, her fancy, her memory, were away, and, to judge by the rigidity of the cheeks and lips, the unrelaxed tension of the low white brow, on no pleasing excursion. The pair worked on in silence, only broken occasionally by a word from George, expressive of admiration for her dexterity and the celerity with which she detached the jewels from the gold setting. At length all was done—the golden band, limp and scratched, was a mere common-place piece of goldsmith's work—the diamonds lay in their box in a shining heap, the discarded turquoises on the table; all was done.

"What shall we do with these things?" asked George. "They are not worth selling—

at least, not now—but I think the blue things might make up prettily with the gold again. Will you keep them, Mrs. Routh? and some day, when I am better off, I'll have them set for you, in remembrance of this night in particular, and of all your goodness to me in general."

He was looking at the broken gold and the turquoises, thinking how trumpery they looked now—not at her. Fortunately not at her, for if he had seen her face he must have known—even he, unsuspecting as he was—that she was shaken by some inexplicably powerful feeling. The dark blood rushed into her face, dispersed itself over her fair throat in blotches, and made a sudden dreadful tingling in her ears. For a minute she did not reply, and then Dallas did look at her, but the agony had passed over her.

"No—no," she said; "the gold is valuable, and the turquoises as much so as they can be for their size. You must keep them for a rainy day."

"I'm likely to see many," said George, with half a smile and half a sigh, "but I don't think I'll ever use these things to keep me from the pelting of the pitiless shower. If you won't keep them for yourself, Mrs. Routh, perhaps you'll keep them for me until I return."

"Oh yes," said Harriet, "I will keep them. I will lock them up in my desk; you will know where to find them."

She drew the desk towards her as she spoke, took out of it a piece of paper, without seeing that one side had some writing upon it, swept the scattered turquoises into the sheet, then folded the gold band in a second, placed both in a large blue envelope, with the device of Routh's last new company scheme upon it, and sealed the parcel over the wafer.

"Write your name on it," she said to George, who took up a pen and obeyed her. She opened a drawer at the side of the desk, and put away the little parcel quite at the back. Then she took from the same drawer seven sovereigns, which George said would be as much as he would require for the present, and which he carefully stowed away in his pocket-book. Then he sat down at the desk, and playfully wrote an I O U for the amount.

"That's business-like," said George, smiling, but the smile by which she replied was so wan and weary, that George again commented on her fatigue, and began to take leave of her.

"I'm off, then," he said, "and you won't forget to tell Routh how much I wanted to see him. Among other things to tell him—However, I suppose he has seen Deane since I have been away?"

Harriet was occupied in turning down the gas-burner by which she had just lighted the candle again. She now said:

"How stupid I am! as if I couldn't have lighted you to the door first, and put the gas out afterwards! The truth is, I am so tired; I'm quite stupefied. What did you say, Mr. Dallas? There, I've knocked your coat off the chair; here it is, however. You asked me something, I think?"

George took the coat she held from her, hung it over his arm, felt for his hat (the room being lighted only by the feeble candle), and repeated his words:

"Routh has seen Deane, of course, since I've been away?"

"No," Harriet replied, with distinctness, "he has not—he has not."

"Indeed," said George. "I am surprised at that. But Deane was huffed, I remember, on Thursday, when Routh broke his engagement to dine with him, and said it must depend on whether he was in the humour to meet him the next day, as Routh asked him to do. So I suppose he wasn't in the humour, eh? And now he'll be huffed with me, but I can't help it."

"Why?" asked Harriet; and she spoke the single word with a strange effort, and a painful dryness of the throat.

"Because I promised to give him his revenge at billiards. I won ten pounds from him that night, and uncommonly lucky it was for me; it enabled me to get away from my horrible old shrew of a landlady, and, indeed, indirectly it enables me to start on this business to-morrow."

"How?" said Harriet. Again she spoke but one word, and again with difficulty and a dryness in the throat. She set down the candle, and leaned against the table, while George stood between her and the door, his coat over his arm.

"You didn't notice that I told you I was all packed up and ready to go. It happened luckily, didn't it?" And then George told his listener how he had paid his landlady, and removed his modest belongings on the previous Friday morning to a coffee-house, close to the river, too. "By Jove! I'm in luck's way, it seems," he said; "so I shall merely go and sleep there, and take my traps on board the Argus. I have only such clothes as I shall want, no matter where I am," he said. "They'll keep the trunk with my books until I come back, and Deane must wait for his revenge with the balls and cues for the same auspicious occasion. Let's hope he'll be in a better temper, and have forgiven Routh. He was awfully riled at his note on Thursday evening."

"Did—did you see it?" asked Harriet; and, as she spoke, she leaned still more heavily against the table.

"No," replied Dallas, "I did not; but Deane told me Routh asked him to meet him the next day. He didn't, it seems."

"No," said Harriet; "and Stewart is very much annoyed about it. Mr. Deane owed him money, and he asked him for some in that note."

"Indeed," said George; "he could have paid him, then. I happen to know. He had a lot of gold and notes with him. The tennor he lost to me he paid in a note, and he changed a fiver to pay for our dinner, and he was bragging and bouncing the whole time about the money he had about him, and what he would, and would not, do with it. So it was sheer spite made him neglect to pay Routh, and I hope he'll dun him again. The idea of Routh being

in the hole he's in, and a fellow like that owing him money. How much is it, Mrs. Routh?"

"I—I don't know," said Harriet.

"There, I'm keeping you talking still. I am the most thoughtless fellow." It never occurred to George that she had kept him until she had learned what she wanted to know. "Good-bye, Mrs. Routh, good-bye."

She had passed him, the candle in her hand, and this farewell was uttered in the hall. He held out his hand; she hesitated for a moment, and then gave him hers. He pressed it fervently; it was deadly cold.

"Don't stay in the chill air," he said; "you are shivering now."

Then he went away with a light cheerful step.

Harriet Routh stood quite still, as he had left her, for one full minute; then she hurried into the sitting-room, shut the door, dropped on her knees before a chair, and ground her face fiercely against her arms. There she knelt, not sobbing, not weeping, but shuddering—shuddering with the quick terrible iteration of mortal agony of spirit, acting on an exhausted frame. After a while she rose, and then her face was dreadful to look upon, in its white fixed despair.

"If I have saved him," she said, as she sat wearily down by the table again, and once more leaned her face upon her hands—"if I have saved him! It may be there is a chance; at all events, there is a chance. How wonderful, how inconceivably wonderful that he should not have heard of it! The very stones of the street seem to cry it out, and he has not heard of it; the very air is full of it, and he knows nothing. If anything should prevent his going? But no; nothing will, nothing *can*. This was the awful danger—this was the certain, the inevitable risk; if I have averted it, if I have saved him, for the time!"

The chill of coming dawn struck cold to her limbs, the sickness of long watching, of fear, and of sleeplessness was at her heart, but Harriet Routh did not lie down on her bed all that dreadful night. Terrible fatigue weighed down her eyelids, and made her flesh tremble and quiver over the aching bones.

"I must not sleep—I should not wake in time," she said, as she forced herself to rise from her chair, and paced the narrow room, when the sudden numbness of sleep threatened to fall upon her. "I have something to do."

Dawn came, then sunrise, then the sounds, the stir of morning. Then Harriet bathed her face in cold water, and looked in her toilet-glass at her haggard features. The image was not reassuring; but she only smiled a bitter smile, and made a mocking gesture with her hand.

"Never any more," she murmured—"never any more."

The morning was cold and raw, but Harriet heeded it not. She glanced out of the window of her bedroom before she left it, wearing her bonnet and shawl, and closely veiled. Then she closed the shutters, locked the door, withdrew the key, and came into the sitting-room. She went to a chair and took up a coat which lay at

the back of it; then she looked round for a moment as if in search of something. Her eye lighted on a small but heavy square of black marble which lay on the writing-table, and served as a paper-press. She then spread the coat on the table, placed the square of marble on it, and rolled it tightly round the heavy centre, folding and pressing the parcel into the smallest possible dimensions. This done, she tied it tightly with a strong cord, and, concealing it under her shawl, went swiftly out of the house. No one saw her issue from the grim, gloomy door—the neighbouring housemaids had not commenced their matutinal task of door-step cleaning, alleviated by gossip—and she went away down the street, completely unobserved. Went away, with her head down, her face hidden, with a quick, steady step and an unfaltering purpose. There were not many wayfarers abroad in the street, and of those she saw none, and was remarked by only one.

Harriet Routh took her way towards the river, and reached Westminster-bridge as the clock in the great tower of the new palace marked half-past six. All was quiet. A few of the laggards of the working classes were straggling across the bridge to their daily toil, a few barges were moving sluggishly upon the muddy water; but there was no stir, no business yet. Harriet lingered when she had reached the centre of the bridge; a figure was just vanishing at the southern end, the northern was clear of people. She leaned over the parapet, and looked down—no boat, no barge was near. Then she dropped the parcel she had carried into the river, and the water closed over it. Without the delay of an instant, she turned and retraced her steps towards home. As she neared South Molton-street, she found several of the shops open, and entering one, she purchased a black marble letter press. It was not precisely similar to that with which she had weighted the parcel, which now lay in the bed of the river; but the difference was trifling, and not to be perceived by the eye of a stranger.

Near the house in which the Rouths occupied apartments there was an archway which formed the entrance to some mews. As she passed this open space, Harriet's glance fell upon the inquisitive countenance of a keen-looking, ragged street boy, who was lying contentedly on his back under the archway, with his arms under his head, and propped upon the kerbstone. A sudden impulse arrested her steps. "Have you no other place to lie than here?" she asked the boy, who jumped up with great alacrity, and stood before her in an attitude almost respectful.

"Yes, ma'am," he said, "I have, but I'm here, waiting for an early job."

She gave him a shilling and a smile—not such a smile as she once had to give, but the best that was left her—and went on to the door of the house she lived in. She opened it with a key, and went in.

The boy remained where she had left him, apparently ruminating, and wagging his tousled head sagely.

"Whatever is *she* up to?" he asked of himself, in perplexity. "It's a rum start, as far as I knows on it, and I means to know more. But how is *she* in it? I shan't say nothing till I knows more about that." And then Mr. Jim Swain went his way to a more likely quarter for early jobs.

Fortune favoured Mrs. Routh on that morning. She gained her bedroom unseen and unheard, and having hastily undressed, lay down to rest, if rest would come to her—at least to await in quiet the ordinary hour at which the servant was accustomed to call her. It came, and passed; but Harriet did not rise.

She slept a little when all the world was up and busy—slept until the second delivery of letters brought one for her, which the servant took at once to her room.

The letter was from George Dallas, and contained merely a few lines, written when he was on the point of starting, and posted at the river-side. He apologised to Harriet for a mistake which he had made on the previous night. He had taken up Routh's coat instead of his own, and had not discovered the error until he was on his way to the steamer, and it was too late to repair it. He hoped it would not matter, as he had left his own coat at South Molton-street, and no doubt Routh could wear it, on an occasion.

When Harriet had read this note, she lay back upon her pillow, and fell into a deep sleep, which was broken by Routh's coming into her room early in the afternoon. He looked pale and haggard, and he stood by the bedside in silence. But she—she sat up, and flung her arms round him with a wonderfully good imitation of her former manner, and when she told him all that had passed, her husband caught her to his breast with passionate fondness and gratitude, and declared over and over again that her ready wit and wonderful fortitude had saved him.

Saved him? How, and from what?

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

OLD SALISBURY.

THE earliest incident in my life I can remember, is being taken (fifty-five years ago) in my nurse's arms to see a man who had been put in the pillory in the market-place at Salisbury. The great cross-frame of the pillory was moved round slowly, to present a front alternately to each quarter of the compass, from each of which rained showers of bad eggs, cabbage-stumps, and other unconsidered trifles, on the undefended pale face of the poor cowed wretch, who had been put up to be pelted. I remember crying because I had not an egg to throw at the man. Does this not sound like a description of an African town?

At that time, there used to be on certain occasions (not necessarily on fair days) large wooden stages erected in the market-place, with amphitheatrical seats, for the gentry and richer people to watch the athletes and countrymen play single-stick. The blows were nearly all on the head, and the man whose blood first ran

down an inch, lost. The great object was with a quick slicing slash to strip the skin down the left temple.

Guy Fawkes Day was a most turbulent festival, quite a saturnalia for the roughs and the street-boys. No Jews of the middle ages could have more dreaded Christmas Day than our quiet shopkeepers dreaded the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot. The mob came round in the morning to every door, shouting for bundles of fagots for the evening bonfires. The awed shopkeepers began towards dusk to put hurdles before their windows. When the bonfires were lighted (with a tar-barrel or so, if they could be got), the noise began, and the sputter and the hiss of enormous squibs as big as walking-sticks. In the dances and processions round the fire, if any one fell in and then scrambled out a little singed, all the better.

One year, this licence degenerated into a riot. The destruction of stray barn doors for the fire, became alarming; some wild spirits even threw an old gig, whole, upon the flames. This was "heaping it up a *little too mountainous*," even for the stoutest Protestant. The volunteers were called out by beat of drum, as the boys had begun to fire squibs in at the town-hall windows; but the mob intercepted the gallant citizen soldiers before they could muster, and chased them away. Even the drum-major and his cocked-hat were not respected. They drove them back to their shops, torn, tattered, and without their arms. The town was preparing itself for a sack, like Badajoz. The major defended himself with his sword, and getting into a corner, declared, with a terrible oath, that if he was not left alone he would charge them, let what might happen. Eventually some soldiers passing through the town, without their fire-arms, were provided with fowling-pieces; and they charged the mob, and took prisoners many rioters, chiefly boys. The jail being full, and a rescue threatened, the boys were locked up in the great council chamber, and there, with a big blazing fire, a nice time they had of it, singing and uttering fearful slander against the mayor and town council, all night, relating their exploits, and threatening still more fun and mischief in the following year. The next day the ringleaders were fined, and the rest dismissed with tremendous cautions.

One great feature of old Salisbury and its festivals (even its elections, if I remember right) were the morris-dancers—yes, the veritable morris-dancers of the middle ages—such fantastic posture-makers as Ben Jonson has introduced into several of his masques—men who waved napkins in one hand and short sticks in the other, and kept in front of processions, turning round with strange antics as they danced, to face those who followed. Hob-a-Nob, the giant, was also a distinguished personage, and his attendant was a man wearing a sword and carrying a side-drum. On great days, the chief trades had each its allegorical representatives. Bishop Blaize, with mitre and crosier, represented the wool-combers, and there were

painted shepherds and shepherdesses with gilt crooks, carrying lambs in a basket. Nor was the hobby-horse forgotten. He made great play by his curvets and prancings, and effected sudden rushes at quiet timid people in the crowd, snapping at coat-tails and tearing gowns, to the general dismay of the sufferers, and the delight of the youngsters. It was amusing at the close of the day to come at the door of some suburban public-house upon Bishop Blaize with a pipe in his mouth, and on the shepherd and shepherdess who guarded the clothing interest sharing a tankard of ale.

In my youth there was a murder committed near Salisbury that excited a prodigious interest. After a heavy snow-storm, a sailor named Curtis, on the tramp from Portsmouth, came to the Salisbury Infirmary, much bruised and cut, as he said, from blows and wounds received in a fight with footpads from whom he had finally escaped. The man was taken care of, and when he went away, having no money, he left several silver spoons, as some return for the kindness that had been shown him. Certain days after his departure for Portsmouth, the body of an old Jew pedlar, well known in the country, and who had been missed latterly on his accustomed rounds, was found by Reuben Marlow, huntsman to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, as he was looking for a fox's earth. It lay in an old gravel or chalk pit on Hanham Hill, near Dogdean Farm, which stands to the left of the Salisbury and Blandford-road. The huntsman came upon the body, as he was moving about the snow in the underwood, and he called out to his companion, rapping out a grisly oath as he spake, "By the Lord, Jack, why, here's the Jew!" For the whole country had been talking about the pedlar's disappearance. The Jew's throat, it was found, had been cut, and his pack, which had contained silver plate, especially spoons, had been rifled.

Some shrewd people, putting things together, remembered that the sailor at the infirmary had left spoons in payment, and, moreover, it was discovered that the two men had been seen together. The sailor, however, had the start, and the fleet had already received orders for sailing. There seemed no chance of laying hands on him; but Providence was against him. The same wind that had suddenly melted the snow and disclosed the murdered body, had also delayed the vessel that was to have borne the murderer safely from his pursuers. The man was caught, and the proofs were collected against him from every side. The crime was fully proved. He was hanged, and gibbeted over the pit where the Jew's body had been found. For years, the carcass, scorched by the sun and soaked by the dews, was the terror of travellers by night. At last, some dragoons being quartered near there, the obnoxious gibbet was removed, on the plea that the soldiers' horses rubbed off their bridles against it.

The old workhouse at Fisherton, near Crane Bridge, was in my younger days the scene of a singular ghost story. I remember the old work-

house, with its quadrangle shut in by a thatched mud-wall, within which quadrangle the old women used to sit weaving. A ghost haunted this workhouse during the old French war. At its first appearance it took the ambiguous form of a "roaring jackass." It was first seen by a discharged soldier on tramp, a wild drunken fellow who was supposed to have broken every commandment, and to have many crimes upon his conscience. People had shunned him as of the race of Cain, an outcast doomed to an old age of beggary and wretchedness. The house being unusually full, this fellow had a bed made up for him in a lonely blind hole under the stairs, in some out-of-the-way corner at the end of one of the wards. One morning, when the paupers awoke, they found him shivering with fear and almost paralysed. The stubbly hair on his vicious bullet head was standing on end; his grisly scars looked livid with blood that refused to circulate in the congealing veins. The old Peninsular soldier had seen a ghost—had been visited by a spirit, probably an evil one. "What was it? What did it do?" asked a hundred voices. Soldier shaken up, and putting himself together, affirmed the ghost to have come stamping down the ward at midnight on three legs—three hoofish legs; and that then a voice like that of a roaring jackass had come bellowing in at the grating of the blind hole where he slept. Horrible nightmare. Time after time it came. Investigations were made, magistrates sat upon the matter, natural history men discussed the possibility of roaring jackasses; the workhouse, the town, was in an uproar.

All this time an officer of the house kept racking his brains and puzzling his keen wits. Going one evening through the female ward, he observed that the wall which divided the male from the female inmates ran near the soldier's sleeping kennel. Moreover, he noticed that an old woman named Sairey Lane often walked about with a stick, and tapped the wall sometimes as she walked. He watched closer and closer, until he all but established that it was this old woman who had simulated the ghost—that Sairey Lane and no other was the roaring jackass. After much trouble, the old woman confessed that she had come night after night to the grate of the blind hole, and roared and brayed there in order to induce the soldier's conversion. The greater his terror, the more supreme her satisfaction. The only drawback on the roaring jackass was its discovery. Once relieved from that incubus, the soldier, contemptuous henceforward of the supernatural, probably went on ripening for the gallows with tremendous rapidity.

There was another haunted house in Salisbury, in my young days—a large, old-fashioned mansion near the Green Croft, on the old London-road. It had belonged in the time of James the First to wicked Lord Audley, that infamous man who perished on the gallows after a life stained by every vice. Old prints still exist representing the James the First people in their bolstered sleeves and hose, and with large ribbon roses on their shoes, as the fashion then was, witnessing Lord Audley's death. The house afterwards belonged

to Sir Giles Estcourt, then to the Wyndhams, and lastly, if I remember right, it was turned into an ecclesiastical college. The first time I was shown the place (as a child), there was, I remember, a three-cocked-hat hanging up in one of the windows, and I attached a mysterious importance to this accidental circumstance, surmising it, of course, to be Lord Audley's hat, and no one else's. The ghost story ran, that on one occasion, when the wicked owner of the house sat revelling and gambling on a Sunday, blaspheming God and cursing man, a strange black dog, like the dog in the Isle of Man mythology, appeared, with supernatural concomitants, entering and departing suddenly and unaccountably. From that moment the cards turned against the blasphemer, the dice fell amiss. With every card down went oak woods, farm-houses, and country mansions; his luck never changed; the sinner lost in that one black-dog evening, his whole estates.

In my younger days, people had more character than they have now. They rejoiced in their own eccentricities and peculiarities, regardless of any one. The great lion of our neighbourhood was that dark and mysterious man, Beckford, the author of "Vathek." Beckford, when he came of age after a long minority, had a million of ready money, and one hundred thousand and five pounds a year. The Earl of Chatham was a visitor at his mother's house, William Pitt was his playmate. He was educated as a prince should be educated. Mozart taught him music, Cozens painting; Sir William Chambers, the builder of Somerset House, architecture. He learned the chief European and Oriental languages; he made the grand tour as a monarch might make it; he saw all the great celebrities of Europe; he mixed in the highest society at every court. He returned home, but dark rumours began to blight his name. He flew to Portugal, and there lived a life of shameless luxury. He returned a forlorn misanthrope, and lived unseen by any, shut up within his own park wall, and shunned by his neighbours.

Whenever this strange person went to London, he used to drive through Salisbury with four horses at a furious pace, to express his contempt and hatred for the town and its inhabitants. There are many persons still living near Salisbury who remember hearing the great tower that Beckford built, falling. The only person hurt was a carpenter, who, putting up a looking-glass at the time, was struck off his ladder by the tremendous rush of air.

In those days, Salisbury abounded in eccentric people. There was Reed the artist: a wild-eyed, long-haired man, who used to race through the streets like a flying Mercury, on his way to the schools where he taught drawing. The great Goethe had mentioned his etchings with respect. He used to have visions, and believed thoroughly in his own genius. His celebrated picture was one of some flounders—not a popular subject. Reed professed to be a great musician, and used to make most hideous faces during service at the cathedral, to show his uncontrollable admiration of certain passages in the anthems.

Then there was Dr. Patrick, whom I have always retained in my mind as a permanent type of ingratitude. The doctor secured a legacy of five hundred pounds from Lady Wallington, entirely by bringing macaroons (when-ever he came on a visit) to her dog Bouncer. When the old lady died, she left the doctor Bouncer and five hundred pounds. A week afterwards, however, the ungrateful doctor sold Bouncer to a blacksmith for three and sixpence.

MY CHURCH IN TOWN.

My church in town! It fronts our square,

With Gothic portals—Scott designer—

Tall spire, and painted windows rare,

There's nothing in all London finer.

A church that's counted "very high,"

A ritualistic rector owning,

Who makes a claim to Heaven rely

On crosses, candles, and intoning.

And crowds of worshippers come there,

Who give one morning of the seven

To treading with exceeding care

A fashionable road to Heaven—

Fine ladies who low bending pray,

And sigh for services in Latin,

And mortify the flesh each day

In gleaming robes of silk and satin.

The curate, "such a dear," you know,

Airs a white hand to turn his pages;

I hardly think St. Paul did so,

When preaching to Athenian sages.

His doctrine, if it have a fault,

Stands much in need of force and flavour,

And makes me think the gospel salt

Has very nearly lost its savour.

Where Dives sits, I look in vain

For Lazarus, even at the portal,

I wonder, does their creed maintain

The rich man only is immortal?

And yet my mind is somewhat eased:

So vain and vapid is the preaching,

That Lazarus hardly would be pleased

To gather fragments of such teaching.

It would be worthier of the times,

And talk of charitable graces,

If we took care the Sunday chimes

Should sometimes sound in silent places,

The broider'd altar-cloth might tell

Of pious hands, and yet be plainer:

A simpler, homelier rite were well,

So should the poor man be a gainer.

THE HOLE IN THE WALL.

THE Hole is within shouting distance of Victoria station, Belgravia, and the Wall is in the midst of the labyrinth of rails leading to and from that mighty maze. Its title and use are as well known in the official railway world as the station itself is to the world of travellers, and from it are issued daily and nightly signals of safety, by means of which the lives of thousands are secured. "There is but one line in, you see, and one out for all the different traffic of this station, and they all join opposite these signals," put the facts of the case in a nutshell, and completely satisfied us as to the meaning of the

strange little private box we were peering into. But let us first walk round Victoria station, commencing at the Grosvenor Hotel, and following the pavement until we turn the corner and gain the booking-offices of the London, Chatham, and Dover Company. It is a goodly distance, and we pass a variety of intending passengers and ticket-places, and, multiplying the space traversed by the number of lines of railway which can be packed into it, we arrive at a proximate estimate of the quantity of trains, engines, "empties," or luggage-vans which may be standing side by side and waiting egress. Excursions to Brighton and the south coast; frequent trains to the Crystal Palace; Metropolitan, Great Western, and London, Chatham, and Dover traffic, make up a stupendous total, the whole of which converges into two single lines opposite the Hole in the Wall. No train leaves or enters the station until signalled to do so from here, and the safety and life of every man, woman, and child leaving Victoria depends upon the vigilance of the single sentinel at his post. He is relieved three times in the twenty-four hours, and the turn of duty we are about to keep commenced at half-past seven this morning, and will terminate at half-past one this afternoon. The whole signal duty of the Hole falls upon three men, who take their eight hours' work alternately, and who with one telegraph clerk are its sole occupants. Passing up the centre platform of the London and Brighton Railway, we step, not without some tremors of misgiving, on to the lines at its extreme end, and after leaving a busy signal-box to the right, and dodging a couple of passenger trains, a stray engine or two, and a long batch of returning "empties" from the Crystal Palace, reach a small wooden staircase and ante-room, from which we look into the Hole. It is very like an unfurnished private box at the theatre, into which some of the mechanist's properties have been put by mistake. Cautiously warned by our conductor not to distract the attention of the man on duty, we advance on tiptoe, and stand on the threshold between ante-room and box. A nervous jump back again, a vivid experience of the sensation known as "pins and needles," a half involuntary guarding of the face as if to ward off an impending blow, are the first results of the experiment. For the mechanist's properties are of the most impulsively practicable kind, and bells ring, whistles shriek, hands move, and huge iron bars creak and groan apparently of their own accord, and certainly by agencies which are invisible. On the right-hand wall of the box, and on a level with the eye, are fastened four cases, which communicate telegraphically with the platforms of the station, with Battersea Park, and with Stewart's-lane junction; and the movable faces of these are full of mysterious cloquence. The furthest one strikes what seems to be a gong twice, and then, without waiting for a reply, bangs the gong four times; the needle hands of the others tick away with spasmodic vigour, and the telegraphic clerk busily passes from one to the other, as if satisfying the wants of each. Beyond them is a small

wooden desk and an open book, in which from time to time their utterances are recorded, much as if they were oracles whose sayings would be afterwards interpreted by the high priests. Beyond the desk, and at the far end of the Hole, is a narrow window, through which the workmen employed on an extension of railway, the rude chasms formed by the excavators, the premature ruins of the houses half pulled down, and the shapely indications of the coming lines, may all be seen. To the left of this window, and facing the entrance door, is an apparatus which I can only describe as terrifying. Composed of strong and massive cranks so connected as to form a consistent whole, and resembling a tangled agricultural harrow, or one of the weird instruments of torture which racked the limbs of schismatics in the bad old times, it has secret springs, and bells, and joints, which creak, and act, and tingle with a direct suddenness highly discomposing to a stranger. You look mildly at one of its joints, and have a question concerning its use on the tip of your tongue, when, presto! it gives a cumbersome flap, and becomes a staring red signboard, with "Crystal Palace up waiting," or "Brighton down waiting," staring you in the face. The bells ring violently, the speaking faces of the shut-up cases tingle in unison, and the whole proceedings remind you forcibly of Mr. Home and the false spirit-world.

The Hole in the Waller in charge, whom for brevity's sake we will for the future designate by the last word of his title, knows all about it, and acts promptly; but to the rash people who have ventured into his cave of mystery the whole proceedings are awesome to the last degree. Waller stands in the front of the private box, which is, of course, open to the stage. This stage is the "one line in and one line out," and the heavy iron handles coming inwards from the front of the box are momentarily worked by him in obedience to the shrieking directions of the machinery named. Thus, when the time for starting a train arrives, word is given to Waller, and one of the red iron flaps comes down with the suddenness of a practicable shop-front in a pantomime, and it rests with him to turn a handle and arrange the "points." Thus, too, when a train is arriving, Battersea-bridge signals Waller, who decides whether the coast is clear and it may come in. It is necessary to remember the space we have traversed, and the number of lines of rails it represented, to appreciate the delicacy and care required. Looking down upon the two narrow rails, spreading as they do into divers directions directly they pass the Hole and approach the station, it seemed to our uninformed observation like squeezing several gallons of liquid into a pint measure. Shriek, whiz, bang from the engine, a harsh grating sound from the wheels, a brief spasm of ponderous locomotion which shakes every fibre of our standing ground, and we learn that another and another human cargo of pleasure or health seekers, or trouble-fliers or money-hunters, have passed by. A rapid jerk upwards or downwards of one of the

iron handles, another angry flap from the instrument of torture, substituting the red disc, "Crystal Palace" or "Brighton" "In" for "Out," a slight change of position in Waller, and an equally slight movement from the telegraph clerk, are the only signs within the prison-house. At the end of the long row of iron handles is a chair, evidently placed there to taunt Waller on the impossibility of sitting down; and keeping a fascinated eye on the constantly changing discs opposite, we occupy this with the firm resolve to master the mysteries of railway-signalling, and to become an affiliated member of the Hole in the Wall. The attempt was a farce, and the result a failure. Waller, a good honest fellow, with black and oily hands, what seemed to be a wisp of engineer's "waste" round his neck, a rather grimy face, a keen grey eye, and an expression honest as a child's smile, cast observations to us interjectionally, which he firmly believed to be elucidatory. But they only served to increase the bewilderment the flaps and jerks and loud tingling had brought about; and, beyond realising very keenly that the faintest slip or mistake on his part would have wrought unmitigated disaster, we failed to master a single detail of what we had come specially to see. "You see, it's mostly cross traffic, is this." Bang went one of the cranks, and out came "Metropolitan out waiting," with its wicked red disc face; whereupon bells rang, and Waller worked a handle, "as I was a-sayin'." Now the train itself rushed by, and word came that a train from Brighton was waiting to come in. "Empties" from the Crystal Palace; a shouting game of question and answer with a pointsman, who uplifts both arms, and remains motionless, like the letter V in a charade; several flaps from the malevolent discs, who seem to take unholy pleasure in interruption; a turning of handles affecting the three dial-signals over the lines to the left, which jut out hands and arms obediently; shrill whistles to the right; a constant watchfulness at the speaking-faces behind, occupy Waller for the next five minutes, and make conversation impossible.

"Now you see, sir, that diss (dise), it tells me the Brighton eleven forty-five it's a-waitin' to come out"—bang goes another infernal gong—"but," continues Waller, quite calmly, "I know, don't you see, that there's somethin' in the way"—two strikes on a more musical instrument here, and a rapid jerk upwards of a heavy iron handle by the speaker—"and now it's all right, as they're puttin' another carriage on, and so, as I was sayin', the line's clear and I lets 'em through."

On the instant a train rushes angrily out as if indignant at delay, and I recognise old Jawby nursing his shin in a first-class carriage just as he does in the club-library in town. Ah, Jawby, my good friend, the superiority of my present position makes me view your social shortcomings with gentle pity and toleration. Uplifting your stupid old forefinger and wagging your pendulous old nose, you were, doubtless,

inveighing to your travelling companion against the infamy of a railway company starting a train "three minutes and a half late, sir," just as I hear you inveighing daily against the shameful conduct of the ministry, or the hideous incapacity of foreign statesmen. Your innocence tickles me as I sit here and know that the three minutes you complain of has saved your life. A wrong turn of this handle, Jawby, a momentary forgetfulness of the meaning of the red "diss," and you and your belongings would have been scattered broadcast to prose and grumble and improve the world (in words) no more. It is curious, as this truth gains shape and force, to look from the Hole at the ever-changing stage at its feet. Trains succeed each other with strange rapidity—"a little extra traffic to-day, you know, sir, bein' Saturday and the Crystal Palace"—and as each compartment gives you a compact section of human life, with its hopes, fears, pleasures, and cares, you come to regard Waller's potentiality for good or evil as something unnatural. Suppose he were to go suddenly mad? Suppose the many irons entered into his soul, and he vowed hostility to his race? Suppose he had intermittent bouts of absence of mind? Suppose he had a fit? Suppose he became muddled by the constant succession of whistles, bangs, and shrieks which have had such a pitiable effect on you?—and to all these questions he makes unconscious answer in his brisk alertness and ever-watchful eye. The stage-box simile gains force from the demeanour of some of the people in the trains. As your first tremors wear off, and you become more hardened to the maniacal working of the practicable harrow in your front, you regard the carriages more closely and with some curious optical effects. Nothing like full speed is attained by the time the Hole is gained, and as the various passengers flit past, they seem like the phantasmagoria of a magic lantern when the slides follow each other rapidly, but not without each figure being firmly impressed upon the retina. Thus, the billing and cooing of a young man in a white waistcoat and blue spangled necktie with a rosy damsel in a buff muslin suit was very apparent. The red hand of the young man against the dull yellow of his beloved's waist was a study for an artist of the pre-Raphaelite school, who might have done wonders with the black circlet on the fingernails and the amorously wooden expression of the twain. There were some fine studies, too, of babies' heads in the act of taking the oldest form of nutriment, while, without reckoning Jawby, there were some "old men eloquent," who would have looked marvellously well on signboards. It seemed a new view of one's fellow-creatures to see them as animated half-lengths, and, as shoal after shoal flitted by, the ease with which they might be immolated recurred again and again with terrible suggestiveness. One felt to look down upon them figuratively as well as literally, when the touch of one of the instruments at our hand

could consign them to immediate destruction; and, dreadful as the confession may seem, the speculation as to which of them would suffer most, and how easily they could be all brought to nought, gained deeper and deeper hold as the trains rolled out. I cannot analyse, and, of course, do not attempt to justify this feeling. It is humiliating enough to acknowledge it, but it is certain that a morbid and an increasing longing to try the experiment of turning a wrong handle and bringing two full trains into collision was the first warning given me of the strain on the nerves produced by the noises and signals described. Puppets in toy-boxes, some well-bedecked, pretty, and glossy, others seamed, shabby, and worn by much use, all playthings of the hour; such was the impression conveyed by the well-laden trains and their cargoes as they rushed madly out and in, in obedience to the hidden springs we touched.

"I didn't let this Chatham and Dover in afore, sir, which it signalled twice, because if I had it would ha' cut them Crystal Palaces in two," was honest Waller's comment, as one train went slowly by, the guard of which nodded to us as to old acquaintance.

"What's coming now?" called a porter from below, who broke through the rule otherwise observed during our stay, of signalling without speech.

"Only Empties."

"Blessed if it ain't Jack Reece, with the carriages as went down to the Palace this morning."

And Mr. Reece, an engine-driver of scorbutic habit, and with an inflamed nose, was permitted to pass slowly in with his convoy. The locomotives of the different companies grew upon us like old friends, as their distinctive marks were mastered and they were introduced by Waller. The situation of what he continued to call their "diss" determined their ownership. A plain white circle on the chimney or boiler, or a white circle picked out with black, similarly placed, were the identifying marks; and it required but a slight sketch of fancy to endow them with life. They certainly seemed to have more will and power than the poor puppet-heads grinning and gesticulating in the cells forming a portion of their flexible tail; and we at last came to regard the noisy puffing snorters as proud-spirited genii, whose humours must be studied under fearful penalties. In the brief lulls, we questioned our companion concerning his mode and time of work, and other matters.

"Yes, sir, it do require a man to be mindful as to what he's a-doing of—there ain't no doubt o' that, and, as I said to the superintendent the other day, a signalman must be allers right"—Waller smiled here not without a touch of bitterness—"allers right he must be, let who will be wrong, and that's where it is. No, sir, I don't make no complaint of the hours, which is considered moderate—eight hours in the twenty-four, which, as I told you, I came on at sivin thirty, and at one thirty I'm due off.

Sharp work it is, sir, while it lasts, and tirin' to the arms until yer used, as I may say, but we never had nothin' wrong until that affair the other day, which you'll perhaps remember. It was that there rod just in front of us that looks new like, that did the mischief. No, sir, I worn't on duty myself at the time, and the man that was ain't been here since—has been discharged, I believe. Yes, sir, it seems a little strict, but it ain't for me to judge, of course, bein' only a servant; but, as you say, it does seem rather harsh. For he was a careful man, he was—a very careful man. I don't believe he'd ever made a mistake afore—and he's fit for signal-work anywheres, but, you see, they thought he ought to ha' felt by this handle that the point didn't act, and ought to have prevented the train a-comin' in, which one certainly would ha' thought he might, though it ain't for me to judge. No, sir, I shouldn't like to have another man at work with me, and I'm sure it wouldn't answer. You see, a man at signal-work is constantly occipied, and there's allers somethin' for him to do. But if there was two of 'em a-working the same signals, why one would perhaps think the other had hold o' the handles or was a-watching for the diss, and, before he found out his mistake, why we should have a couple o' trains cuttin' each other in two. No, sir, there weren't any passengers killed nor injured, as I've heerd, but I believe one of the porters was bruised and shaken rather bad, and was taken off to the 'orspital. The man turned the handle right enough, just as I turn this; but, instead o' the rod moving as you see that do now, why, bein' broke, it didn't act, and brought on the accident. No, sir, you can't very well sit down, not in the daytime, at least, and you haven't time not scarcely to eat a bit o' food"—and Waller glanced here at a basin wrapped in a pink cotton pocket-handkerchief, and suspended from a nail behind me—"except standing, and while you're at your work. Well, sir, I couldn't say exactly how many trains come in and out of a day, but there's a tidy lot of 'em, and engines and empties as well. First train out, sir, is what we call the workman's train, and leaves at four in the morning. It's a Chatham and Dover, and takes the labourers, and such like, to the works about. Well, you see, it ain't only the men as starts from here, but, bein' a stoppin' train, it picks 'em up at all the stations it passes near. Then, the last train in to Victoria, is a London and Brighton, which is due at fifty-five arter twelve at night, so, you see, there ain't more than three hours, as you may say, when passenger trains ain't runnin', in the twenty-four. Yes, it's pretty much as you see it now through the day, but slacks a little at night. The busiest railway signal-place? Well, it used to be reckoned so, but, what with improvements and alterations, and new lines, there's several now where there's more doin' than this one. Yes, sir, more than every minute or two, as you see, and the train-tables they don't give you but a very poor dear of the number of signals. The traffic

of this station is a good double what you'd find in any train-table, because they don't take in what you may call the station traffic, such as engines, or carriages shunting, or empty trains which is wanted to begin again with when there's a run of specials."

These facts were not given consecutively, but by fits and starts, in the intervals of handles being jerked, or whistles answered, or the flaps of the red "disses" obeyed. Waller had neither peace nor rest, and as the engine-drivers and guards passed by, I discovered that a sharp twist of the head and a peculiar grimace, like that of an unsophisticated dram-drinker when the "nip" is unusually strong, is the settled mode of flying salutation. Only the guards' heads were seen. The glass side of the raised roof of their compartment just allows those in the Hole to see to their shoulders, and as head after head flew by they resembled rotatory toys or a fast phase of the rapidly changing magic-lantern slides. Do what we would, we could not realise the importance of the arrangement, or that the noisy monsters we controlled were charged with precious human lives. Waller was simply a trustworthy, steady skilled labourer, who performed his allotted task without wavering, who followed the mystic instructions it was his life's business to master, and who, in the monotonous discharge of mechanical labours, exercised discretion, watchfulness, and care. But the longer we remained, and the more he endeavoured to explain the signals, the more maddening was the confusion. "There, sir, you see that there arm? Well, that tells me"—(Aside: "Ah, there's the Brighton down")—"tells me, you know"—(Renewed aside: "Crystal Palace a-waitin' now, then")—puff—snort—bang—"tells me that all's clear"—(Aside continued: "Battersea-bridge a-speaking now")—"and then by turnin' this here handle, now you see the diss has altered, which means"—puff, snort, and bang—"as I was a sayin'." And so it went on, until, with repeated thanks, we said we should like to regain the platform, and think over what we had seen and heard.

This was no easy matter, though the distance is not great. We could have made ourselves heard by shouting to the porter, picking his teeth on the wine-hammer at its side, but the monsters were constantly darting out, and it was only after missing several opportunities that the final "Now, sir, you've nice time, if you start directly this next train goes by," was acted upon. A breathless rush, and what seemed a shockingly narrow escape of being run down and mangled, and we are by the toothpicking porter's side, who views us angrily, and asks "wot we're a-doin' of there?" The Hole looks less wonderful now. The trains and engines fly by it as before, but results only are seen, and the mechanism seems perfect. Still the questions arose, and have repeated themselves without a satisfactory answer ever since, What if the Waller of the time being should suddenly succumb? What if eight hours at a stretch of work, the first eight minutes' contemplation of which had

bewildered me, should be too much for his powers? What, in short, if the system broke down for one minute out of the many hundreds of minutes each man is consecutively employed?

Since the foregoing experience the subject has fascinated me, and I have created opportunities for speculating at other railway stations upon the traffic. I have not yet ascertained which line's "improvements" have made it exceed the Hole's for a rapid succession of trains, but I could point to several which are fully deserving of "honourable mention," if prizes were given for the greatest hazard run. My official friend at Victoria smiled when I said eight hours at a time seemed a long stretch for such arduous and absorbing work, and Waller evidently thought himself well treated in that particular. The maddening signals, too, are doubtless simplicity itself when understood, and it is only their number and variety which make them seem perilous. The mechanism is admirable, the adaptation of means to an end deserving all praise, and the immunity from accident a point upon which those responsible have every right to lay stress. But, let one link in the complex chain of cause and effect fail—let either the human or mechanical gear be out of order for an instant, and it seems certain that the Hole and kindred places on every line of railway in the kingdom would immediately become the scene of a tragedy at which society would stand aghast, and at which we should all cry as with one voice, why was not this matter sifted earlier, and the obvious danger it led up to prevented before?

THE ALMANACH DE GOTHA.

THERE is consternation in the editor's room at Gotha.

Who has not on his library-table, side by side with Burke and Dodd, that wonderful production, the *Almanach de Gotha*? It is the history of the genealogy of all the reigning families in Europe, the peerage of Germany. In this volume no illustrious Bug crawls up the tree of a Howard. Everything is pur sang. Hapsburg and Hohen-zollern, Wittelsbach and Saxon, ay, down to the reigning Princes of Waldeck Lippe and Detmold and to the Counts of the Holy Roman Empire, all are given in the most accurate manner. The square little volume, with its four portraits of kings, queens, or statesmen, its excellent index, its carefully compiled statistics, its historical references, is a work of no common order. It is published simultaneously in French and German.

Yet, as we have said, there is consternation in the editorial room at Gotha. The *Almanach* for 1867 was almost ready to be launched forth into the world, when, lo! like the simoon, Prussia sweeps over the north of Germany, and kings and princes are carried away by the blast like so many reeds; even the stalwart tree of Austria has lost many of its branches, blown away by the storm, though the stem still stands firm on its deep-set roots. The hurricane has lulled; the treaty of Prague calms for a time

the troubled elements; diplomacy has done its work! But it is a much easier task to sign a treaty and exchange ratifications than to re-write a compendium like the *Almanach de Gotha*.

"*Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?*" sang Arndt, and the editor of the *Almanach de Gotha* is at his wits' end to make it out. Is it Prussian land? Is it Bavarian land? Is it Saxon land? *O nein! O nein!* "*Das ganze Deutschland muss es seyn!*"

But now comes the dilemma. The whole German Confederation is extinguished, and Frankfurt, the seat of the Diet, annexed; consequently the thirty-two states, including the Hanse Towns, must be struck out of the *Almanach*, and the North German Confederation above the Maine inserted instead. As regards the embryo Confederation of the Southern States, all is chaos. Then Austria has lost Venetia, Denmark has lost the Duchies, and, worst of all, no one knows whether the few remaining ninepins will not be bowled down by the strong arm of a Bismarck or of a Napoleon!

We are careful readers of the *Almanach de Gotha*; we venerate its pages; we look upon its volumes as so many mortuary tablets in memoriam of departed greatness and disappointed ambition. Death, as Horace tells us, knocks equally at the door of the palace of the king and of the cot of the peasant; but that is the course of nature. That is not the view we take. We believe in Nemesis, who strikes during lifetime. What an array of dethroned kings and princes might be marshalled forth since 1848! Under the head of France, we find in the *Almanach* of 1849 the Orleans family struck out and the Napoleon dynasty in its place. But such an event is not of a nature to disturb the mind of the editor of the *Almanach de Gotha*. It is easier to shoot a lion with a single bullet than to exterminate a nest of wasps. Saxony is not yet annexed, and may remain intact in the *Almanach* of 1867; but Hanover, Nassau, Hesse Cassel, Darmstadt, and others, must all have a pen struck through them, and be added to Prussia. Prussia is like the devil-fish described by Victor Hugo in his *Travailleur de la Mer*. It holds in its strangling grip all the petty princes of Germany. We are in October; the continental arrangements are by no means settled, and the *Almanach* must appear on the first of January!

We have good reason for saying again, that consternation prevails in the editor's room at Gotha.

OUR YACHT.

OUR yacht at this moment lies far out in the harbour, in a pleasant grove of masts and rigging formed by some forty or fifty of her sisters. The sea is as blue and glistening as the sea at Genoa, and the harbour stretches out its two long delicate arms of a pale yellow, to gather in all her craft tenderly to herself. It is a fine fresh sea-day, and the whole waste before us is of a rich blue and silver, and the waters

seem to say invitingly, "Come and bathe!" The handsome hill far off makes a graceful boundary for the bay (and our bay is said to be a trifle finer than a certain Bay of Naples), and behind are the snowy chalk-looking lines of houses laid in bands on the hills, and glistening like everything else. There are the low-lying yacht-club houses on the right and left hands, and there is the pier, which stretches out like a long finger, and up to which the great mail steamers come gliding. With such a setting, and on such a day, our yacht looks very respectable indeed, and, so to speak, holds her own. She is not ambitious, being about two and thirty tons burden, and musters a crew of four men, including "a skipper," of whom a word more by-and-by. But speaking with a professional air of skilfulness, let us say that she is a very "handy" size, and has more conveniences and fewer responsibilities than greater craft.

Her decks are as bright and polished as if they were a vast expanse of churn spread out fresh from the most scrupulously kept dairy, and the sail flaps lazily as if it were our yacht's white coat put on in a tropical climate and languidly worn. Her mast glistens in the sun, and looks like a great stick of sugar-barley. Her hull outside is of a close brown chocolate; and her linen, fore and aft, is smooth and spotless. Below, everything is "snug"—a little square chamber like a room in a travelling van, with tiny bedrooms off it, and a tinier kitchen beyond, out of which our cook emerges mysteriously, and always in a bent attitude—a position which we have all learnt to acquire by a sort of instinct, and a rueful experience purchased at the sacrifice of crushed and flattened head-gear.

It is a moment of justifiable pride when we go down the steps of the pier to where our boat lies, and when our own men, with the name of our own yacht, "QUEEN MAY," inscribed in sampler-like letters on their broad chests, are waiting obsequiously. They are our nautical serfs. They reverently take in our cloaks and wraps, and with yet more reverence our ladies; they drop their oars with a professional plash, and pull away with a will. Then comes the getting aboard. Then we go "hauling on our main-sheet," get up our anchor, and one of the pleasantest moments of the whole is when our yacht, after a flap or two to give herself courage, lets herself fall back gracefully into the arms of the wind, and goes off (I hope this is professional) as a young lady would do in a valse. That moment when "her head" comes round and we all "heel over," is also one of the most agreeable. The ladies bivouack about the deck with parasols up and dresses fluttering, dipping their heads by trained instinct, as a matter of course, to avoid the "boom," when the clatter and flapping and patter of feet which make up the operation known as that of "going about" set in.

Getting clear of the harbour, and catching the full fresh gush of breeze and open sea, our sail fills out like a shell. Our skipper is at the

stern: a wonderfully compact, compressed, and Dutch-looking mariner, who, when appealed to about the weather, as he often is, or about the ownership of a passing yacht, or about the distance of the Channel Islands, or about the tide, deliberately consults the sky, then the sea and horizon, and finally the deck of his own vessel, before he will trust himself to reply. Nautical strangers take this slowness to be born of physical infirmity, and repeat these questions testily; but the initiated know him better, and give him time to go through this process.

As a rule, ladies are far better sailors than men. When our yacht gets out of the breeze and begins to swing up and down, like a restive horse under the curb, I notice that gentlemen grow a little pensive, if not silent, looking gloomily up and down the deck; but the spirit of our ladies is excellent, and they long for the breeze that shall blow their hair from under their hats. By-and-by it *does* come; then the QUEEN MAY swings herself over with a sudden lurch, and sweeps through the water stiffly.

Presently the banquet is spread below, on a balanced table, when a heavy blue mariner comes in from the mysterious kitchen, carrying hot potatoes. On that signal, locker-boxes; pigeon-holes, all open, and, being rifled, give up their dead. The good fairies of our yacht touch this and that spring, and forth come wine and salad, and well-embrowned poultry, like the viands in a pantomime feast. The champagne fitly comes up out of the wooden ground, thus happily carrying out the position of a cellar; the mustard lies down peacefully with the bread; the salad-oil sleeps side by side with the cigar. Yet all such elements are refractory and embarrassing, and have to be watched like schoolboys. When our yacht grows frantie and seems to be in liquor—reeling from side to side, staggering, all but falling on her face, a shocking and indecent spectacle—her cabin becomes a great churn, and everything not fixed, is flung about and dashed into chaos. Once, even our select library—whose place of honour is always over the little shelf known as a berth—under the violence of the gale burst its fastenings, and Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Buckle's Civilisation, Maunder's Treasury, and Miss Berry's Diary and Correspondence—all stout and portly volumes of their kind—came down incontinently, and buried the sleeper in a heap of biblical ruins.

The great festival for our bay, and indirectly for our yacht, is, when a regatta comes round. We do not enter her for Cups, not having much confidence in her powers in that direction, though our skipper, after previously consulting sky and sea and the lines of his deck, has hinted oracularly, that from private information he "know'd" she could do it, if she were "put to it." Yet though this seems a just encouragement, we have never ventured to "put her to it;" and we have always given as the reason—not wishing to put our *protégée* to shame—that

she was not "in trim;" that it was too much trouble to get her into trim; that there was no better "sea-boat between this and the Isle of Man" (arbitrarily limiting the area to that district of ocean for no valid reason); finally, adding darkly, that "she could give a good account of the M—sq—to, or the B—nsh—e, or any of their vaunted craft, if *she chose*."

This granite settlement, which glitters in the sun, and looks as snowy as if it were scrubbed and burnished, lies along a pleasant shore, and is a sort of suburb to a great city, from which (some seven miles away, by the railway) the inhabitants are pouring in every moment. The long white winding arms of the harbour, its elbows, its wrists, the tips of its fingers even, are blackened over as with clouds of flies. On the piers, and on the shores, and up the hilly streets that lead to the little sea-town, the people cluster in swarms; they are busy with the "Punches," the shooting for nuts, and the cheap roulette: sure and certain tokens that British festivity has set in. Every spot that can hold a pole, and every stick that can be made to take the likeness of a youth-pole, flutters with streamers and gaudy flags.

We see the men-of-war all over flags, and the platforms of the club-houses all crowded. From our club comes the sound of military music, and at its little piers is a succession of arrivals performed with all nautical state; for the harbour is one vast thoroughfare for boats going and returning among commodores, vice-commodores, and other great men of the sea. It is pleasant to behold the salt of the sea arriving, with red-capped rowers and white-capped rowers, in yellow boats that are like mirrors with shining varnish, and who come up to the steps with judicious sweep, and whose oars fly into the air at the one moment. Presently comes the man-of-war's long white boat, with its six strong rowers in indigo shirts, and the captain in the stern with his Union Jack apparently growing out of the small of his back at a graceful angle.

Presently come ladies, she sea-captains, who are going round these islands, and who are better sailors, perhaps, than their lords, and who wear a nautical suit—sailor's hat, with a blue ribbon and anchor, and a kind of roomy serge pea-jacket—not yet, however, those other roomy "things" that Jack also wears, but there is no knowing what may be yet ordained.

Our club, which is assumed to be an universal nautical host on this occasion, does the briny honours with great effect. Every commodore and vice-commodore, every yacht captain, is bidden. We swarm over again and again with very theatrical-looking seamen, with loud quarter-deck voices, and much blotched with gold buttons. But everything is pleasant and very welcome; especially that lounging for hours on the galleries and balconies, and more especially still, the banquet, which sets in at about four of the clock, and which is given in the "cool grots" of our boat-house below, transformed into quite gaudy regions by flags and calico. Those two

enchanters can do wonders. Gradually the sun goes down, and the cool stillness of evening steals on. Now the huge mail-packet, with four great chimneys, drifts in; gliding among the smaller boats in a placid good-natured way, as who should say, "Easy, my little boys; don't be afraid, I shan't hurt or tread on you!" and lets down its London passengers—men of business and strangers—who rub their eyes, and wonder is this the normal state of the natives they are coming among? Everything is dreamy, tranquil, and pleasant.

By-and-by, when the commodore has fired his evening gun, and every flag in harbour comes sliding down, the cool greys come gradually on, and the colder darkness. Then lights begin to twinkle here and there, and afar off are seen the full white sails of the winning yachts, bending as they come in, and seeming to make low curtsies. The sea glistens and drips like melting glass. The lights glimmer, and get reflected in a thousand timid ripples. There is an air of languid fatigue over everything. But our club is all ablaze with light; and, looking from the pier over the heads of the crowd at its windows, strained as wide open as they can bear, can be seen many heads moving up and down, and many muslin backs reposing, while the sound of the loud excellent string band further proclaims that high festival is raging.

Through the bluish darkness, lights begin to twinkle everywhere, from the greater light at the entrance of the harbour, which at fixed intervals becomes unseen and then turns its "bull's-eye" on us with a start, like a distant policeman. All between is liberally sprinkled with soft dots of lights, which expand into perfect lanterns when coming through the cabin tops of the yachts. The whole harbour is alive with boats; for now the night's fun is about to begin, and the fireworks to blaze. Every deck has its crowd of ladies and gentlemen, and echoes with chatter of voices and peals of laughter. The harbour is a great noisy highway. Now, do the men-of-war begin with a hiss and a roar to burst out into lines of blue light, and every line and rope seems lighted up with gigantic lucifer-matches. Then, do all the smaller fry follow suit, and aboard our yacht everybody is turned to profit, and made to stand in a line and hold a port-fire over the bulwarks, with the pleasing effect of dropping molten blue blazes into the water. Then, comes the professional display of fireworks from the shore; the roaring rockets, the catharine wheels sputtering and blowing, as if they were in a passion, and the set pieces. Now does every yacht let off her own private rockets, discharging them artfully so as to let the sticks fall among "friends" on the deck of a neighbouring yacht. And as the water is all but covered with overloading boats creeping in and out and anywhere, a more exquisite diversion is found in letting the sticks fall into the centre of a packed crowd, from which

arise screams of delighted terror and uproarious laughter. Altogether an Italian night, and worth looking back to.

A MERE SCRATCH.

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

THE time occupied in the ride home had wrought no change in George's resolution; but it had shown him sufficient of the danger and perplexity of the course he had determined on, to suggest some slight cautionary measure. He resolved, therefore, to proceed, without halting, straight to his own dwelling, where, admitted as usual by one of the male domestics, he would retire to his chamber or study, and enjoy a season of reflection, with the consolation, at all events, of being in a position still to exercise some liberty of choice. The idea of present security was thus yet dominant in George's mind, when the door at length opened.

"You have not hurried yourself, I hope," he began. But the fatal words were still on his lips, when George became conscious that he was standing face to face with his portly cook!

The young man literally staggered, as if he had received a blow, and his face became deadly white. Collecting himself, however, he gave his horse to a groom, who came running up, and entered the house.

Mrs. Turnover, executing an apologetic bob, or curtsy, was beating a hasty retreat, when her master's voice recalled her.

"Mrs.—Mrs. Turnover, come with me a moment."

He went into a side apartment, and sat down. His agitated face alarmed the cook.

"You're ill, I'm afeard, Sir George. Shall I make you anything? Cup o' tea: little drop o' sperrets?"

"Nothing. Sit down, if you please."

"Sir!"

"Sit down."

Mrs. Turnover obeyed.

"Tur—Mrs. Turnover, by-the-by, what is your other name? I forget," said her master.

"Barbary Hann, sir."

"Barbara Ann," his voice trembled.

"Sir!" said the good lady, getting more and more uneasy.

"Barbara" (Mrs. Turnover started), "don't be surprised or annoyed at what you are about to hear."

"Certingly, Sir George," said the cook, getting up to curtsy, and subsiding again. "'Ow-
ever, if 'tis about the butter, I've—"

"It has no especial reference to butter, or anything of that description," said her young master. "Barbara, I give you warning—"

"Warning, sir!" ejaculated the cook, in consternation. "Whatever 'ave I done?"

"A warning, truly," said her master, with a dismal smile, "but not exactly to—no, Barbara, not to leave me. Listen. I am perfectly serious, perfectly resolved, and I shall presently require of you as serious and as resolved an answer to the perhaps unexpected question I am going to

put to you. Without, at present, entering into fuller explanations, are—are you w—willing, Barbara, to—become—my—wife?"

Mrs. Turnover gave utterance to a slight scream, and leaned back in her chair, which creaked, sympathetically, as though exhorting the sitter to take heart. Her first idea was that Sir George had returned home in that peculiar condition, originally invented by the police, and defined in their reports as "been drinking," that is, while not wholly deserving the jovial adjective "drunk," ripe for any of those little aberrations to which drinking leads. But, remembering his temperate habits, this idea speedily gave place to a worse—namely, that he had gone suddenly mad.

Now, the good cook had both heard and read that the prevailing mode of dealing with lunacy at the present day, involves a pretended coincidence in, and promotion of, any remarkable fancy. Demeaning herself accordingly, Mrs. Turnover, with a coolness and presence of mind that really astonished herself, returned a soothing answer.

"You're verry good, Sir George" (poor creeter!) "and a verry natural thing" (George started) "it were of you to wish for to give me such a nice little surprise. But—but I don't think you're quite your own quiet self this night. There, now, there! Don't, like a hexcellent gentleman, hexcite yourself. P'raps you're a bit flustered like, with riding so sharp home. You feels that, too," continued Mrs. Turnover, in persuasive accents, "and, at this verry individual moment, I sees you whisperin' to yourself—Barbary's right. I'll lay down for 'alf an hour, and 'ave a cup o' tea, and then enjoy any further conversation comferrably."

"Thank you," replied Sir George. "You're a kind-hearted creature, and you mean well. But, Mrs. Tur—that is, Barbara—understand, I pray, without more words, that I am as sane, as sober, and as heartily in earnest, as ever I was in my life. Come, does that satisfy you?"

"O' course it do, Sir George. Unappy creeters! it's what they all says," added Mrs. Turnover, aside. "Never did I see a saner gentleman than him's a settin' there. In hearnest?—why, o' course you aire. What was poor Turnover's last words, Sir George, when sinking?"

"I don't remember—I never heard," said the baronet, absently. "Words?"

"'Putt every confidence in the sperior sect,' he ses. 'Trust 'em. They knows what they're about, and if they does mislead you, why, they're sometimes verry sorry, which makes,' he ses, 'all square.' Whereas, Sir George, I putts trust in *you*, and verry grateful feels for your kind preference," concluded Mrs. Turnover, rising as she spoke, in the hope of putting an end to the embarrassing conference.

"Listen to me, Turnover," said the young man, gravely. "On the supposition that I am mad, you affect to indulge what seems to you an extraordinary fancy, and to receive it as something perfectly natural; nay, to

be expected! This is nonsense. Having taken the matter in its insane aspect, suppose you try it now in its reasonable one. Granted the step I propose to take is unusual, and may be judged of by the world in a manner not flattering to my self-esteem, there are reasons which outweigh such considerations. I once more distinctly place before you, Barbara Ann Turnover, heretofore my servant, the opportunity of becoming my wife."

"I thought I should ha' dropped," said Mrs. Turnover, subsequently, "when, repeating it so steadfast, as though actually asting the banns, master putt out his hand, kivered with rings, and smiled as sweet as an angel. While I were hesitating and wiping my hand on my apron, he come forrard, impatient, and said: 'Come, my good Barbara, I have giv' you a unfair surprize. Go now, for the present, and think over what I have proposed. I don't require you for to kip it,' he ses, 'anyways secret. You will let me know to-morrow morning—yes, to-morrow—to-morrow——' His voice got choky like, and he sot hisself down again, kivering his white face with his hands. Which I curtseyed," concluded Mrs. Turnover, "and, upset as I were, didn't I go, as fast as ever I walked in my life! But I didn't get no further than the staircase, for theer I simmed to forgit whear I was, and all about it."

George had raised his eyes in time to witness that precipitate movement of retreat Mrs. Turnover has herself described. It recalled so vividly the action of a frightened goose, that he could not repress a bitter smile.

"She will do justice to the name in *one* particular at least!" he muttered.

He was in the act of rising to go to his chamber, when a loud singular sound, such as, if a pony ever uttered an audible laugh, might be produced by that animal, echoed from the staircase, followed by a wail and sobs so unmistakably human, that the young man rushed out to inquire their source, and beheld the poor cook on the upper steps in high hysterics. Before he could summon assistance, the distressful accents had reached other ears, for somebody—it was a young person George had never before seen—came bounding from an adjacent apartment to the rescue. For a second their eyes met. George had only time to note that the face, though somewhat haughty in expression, was of singular beauty, and, further, that a crimson flush mounted, unnecessarily as it seemed, to the stranger's brow, when other help arrived, and the young master of the house discreetly withdrew.

"What noble features! and, by Jove! what a complexion!" was his comment. "That blush alone was perfection. Ah, nature, who can paint like thee? Who is the girl, I wonder? Not of these parts, surely. No servant, I am sure. Perhaps a seamstress of Clara's. Perhaps——"

He fell into a strange reverie, standing so long with one boot off and leaning on a chair, that he positively started when, rousing himself, he looked at his watch. Night was coming on,

a fact of which he was further apprised by the appearance of Mr. Fanshaw, the butler, bringing candles, and a request to know if he would be pleased to take dinner?

Sir George declined the superior meal, but ordered coffee to be brought to his room, and prepared to write. Thereupon Mr. Fanshaw, after a slight and purposeless buzz about the room, and a wistful but stealthy look at his master, withdrew.

George had caught the look in his mirror.

"They all know it, then, by this time!" was his correct conclusion.

When Mr. Fanshaw reappeared with the coffee, George forced himself to inquire for Mrs. Turnover.

Either the good lady anticipated the query, or Mr. Fanshaw was good at improvisation, for he at once replied:

"Mrs. Turnover's duty, Sir George, she 'ave laid down for a few minutes, Sir George, and feels quite charmin', Sir George."

The suitor uttered something between a cough and a groan, and turned steadily to his writing.

He was occupied with one letter full half an hour. The pen travelled swiftly, but the journey was apparently in vain, for at the end of several pages George suddenly stopped, glanced back hastily at what he had written, and tore the whole to atoms.

"To *her*, to-morrow," he muttered. "To-night, I am distraught. Poor Clara!"

Poor George! may be added. For it is no easy matter to communicate, in an entirely satisfactory manner, to the most attached of sisters (especially if she be the wife of a haughty earl) that you are about to be affianced to your cook.

"It is too late for the post, I suppose?" said George to the butler, who entered at this moment.

"Not if 'tis sent immediately, Sir George," was the reply. "Dawes can take it at once, Sir George; he's at the stable gate now, Sir George, with the dog-cart, Sir George."

"The dog-cart? Why?"

"Going to take Miss Esther, Sir George."

"Who is Miss Esther?"

"Miss Vann, Sir George. Mrs. Turnover's niece, Sir George," said Mr. Fanshaw, promptly.

"Mr. Dawes does not consider it necessary to await my orders, it would seem," said the young baronet, with unwonted tartness. "Be good enough to desire him to put up the dog-cart instantly. I have *no* letters to-night."

"And, and the young la——, person, Sir George? 'Tis too far for such a girl to walk at night, and all alone, Sir George."

"Who wants her to walk? She can sleep here, if she chooses."

Mr. Fanshaw quitted the room.

"Not badly managed," thought George. "Two things gained. I must keep down this disposition in my household to treat me as they please. This will be more than ever necessary *now*. And I shall perhaps also see how the *morning* roses bloom. How pretty she was!"

The butler reappeared.

"I beg pardon, Sir George; Mrs. Turnover is quite agreeable, Sir George; but Miss Esther herself insists on walking home, Sir George, nor we can't pervert her, Sir George."

"Present my compliments to Miss—what name did you say?—Esther—and request her, as a favour, not to put me to the pain of sending a lady from Gosling Graize, even in a carriage, at this hour of the night, when twenty chambers are at her disposal. Dawes will receive her orders in the morning, at any hour she pleases."

"Yes, Sir George, very good, Sir George," said Mr. Fanshaw, evidently approving the amended message, and went his way.

George thought of Mildred till he went to sleep. A revolution then occurred, and slumber, which has a tyranny of its own, decreed, and somehow contrived, that he should dream of Esther Vann.

CHAPTER IV.

IN the mean time, there had been proceeding, in the apartment occupied by Mrs. Mapes, the housekeeper, a grand council, or divan. Stretched upon a couch (for she was, as has been stated, a victim to rheumatism), Mrs. Mapes, excited by the astounding intelligence which had reached her, looked less like an invalid than might have been expected, and took an ample share in the deliberations. Truth to say, these were almost exclusively of a conjectural character, and had reference to the enigma present to every mind, and expressing itself *there*, in the simple terms "how ever master can mean to make such a fool of hisself as *this* comes to!"

The heroine of that eventful day—Mrs. Turnover herself—was seated in a chair of state, close beside the presidential couch, surrounded by her admiring, not to say wondering, friends, while Esther sat apart, pale, sad, bewildered, hardly able to believe that what she saw and heard was not a foolish dream. Compelled to yield to Sir George's proposition, she was content to let it be thought that the restraint put upon her movements had slightly affected her temper, and made her disinclined to take part in the debate.

"And you are *sure*, my dear soul, he ain't mad?" said Mrs. Mapes, affectionately (for she didn't like her), placing her hand on the pudgy paw of Mrs. Turnover.

Some hours, it will be remembered, had now elapsed since Sir George's return, and the observant reader, aware how readily the human mind adapts itself to the most unexpected contingencies, will not be surprised to learn that Mrs. Turnover began to be a little annoyed at the circumstance of everybody at once jumping to the conclusion that nothing short of insanity could explain their master's choice. She therefore replied with a little acerbity, that he might have been mad, for aught she knew; but, at the same time, he evidently know'd well enough what he was a-doing on.

"Don't be angry, my dear creature," said the

mild housekeeper. "*We* don't think it strange, we that know your value, that you should have a handsome offer. But master's seen so little of you, so *very* little, hasn't he? What ever can be his reason?"

"To be sure, he've seen a good deal more of *you*," retorted Mrs. Turnover. "But it don't seem to have made any difference, in a matrimonial pint o' view."

"He might have heard what a hexlent creature you be," said Gertrude, going in betimes for serious flattery.

"It's not a sudding thing," remarked the laundry-maid. "Depend upon it, this has been a long time shimmering in his mind. He wanted to be quite sure of his feelings. It's awkward, when a man ses slap he loves you, and then finds he don't. That's why master was so long speaking out."

"Well, at all events he done it effectually at last," said Mrs. Turnover, hardly knowing whether the last speech could be taken in a complimentary sense, or not.

"There's no guessin' o' men. They hides their feelings so," said Gertrude, who squinted, had a snub nose, and from whom mankind in general had managed to conceal their feelings most successfully.

"Did you notice any simtims of offection at hodd times, such as when he was a-hordering dinner, or paying your wages, and that, ma'am?" inquired Mr. Fanshaw, whose presence in the lady's room was tolerated in consideration of the importance of the occasion, and on condition that he did not sit down. "Come! did he never make no excuse for to squeeze your hand?"

"I—I don't remember as he ever did—no, I am positive he never did," said Mrs. Turnover, after due reflection.

"Or was you ever sittin' by him permiscus anywheres, when he's nudged you, or pinched your helbo?" pursued Mr. Fanshaw, whose ideas of wooing seemed exclusively muscular.

"Never," said the lady.

"P'raps he's heard as you're 'titled to some money!" suggested a voice in the distance. But this spiteful idea was scouted.

"It can't hardly be my figger," said the cook, frankly. "'N' more it couldn't be my face, for I'm changed a bit since Turnover first kep company with me at Habbot's Hann. I *weer* pretty then."

"Why, what aire you *now*, ma'am?" put in the unblushing Gertrude. "Look at your heye, and your 'air. I've heard tell it used to be sot upon."

"Law!" said Mr. Fanshaw. "Is that good for the hair?"

"Turnover was as proud as a peacock of my curls, just as if they was his own," said his relict, with a sigh. "His last words to me, huttered just as his voice was failing, was these: 'Barbary,' he ses, 'give me some drops.' We giv 'em. Then he goes on, 'French is good 'air, specially for middle-aged fronts and puffers. North German makes good working wigs; but Swish is best of all,' he ses. 'I've paid,' he ses, 'graspin' my hand, 'as much as three pound seven, ay, and three pound twelve, for Swish light brown, afore baking. But into anything like

yours, for substance, glos, and fibre, I never yet did put a comb!—Adoo.”

“Well now, to business,” said Mrs. Mapes. “What shall you say, my dear? Of *course*, if master’s offer’s serious, you accept it. The only question then is, *is it serious?*”

“Yes, ma’am, it is,” said Mrs. Turnover, resolutely. “Make yourself quite easy as to *that*. When a gentleman asks you in plain words whether you’ll be his wife, I suppose he means to ask whether his wife you will be.”

Mrs. Mapes admitted that the phrase might be regarded as convertible; but, as a final conjecture, would submit to the general suffrage, whether it were not possible that the young master’s desire to retain permanently near him a person so skilled in her peculiar vocation, was the real motive of his choice.

Mrs. Turnover thought within herself that the object might have been attained on somewhat cheaper conditions; but she made no reply.

“Well, I always fancied there was some one else master fancied,” said the housekeeper.

“You mean—hum—down there, the Haie,” said Mr. Fanshaw, darkly.

Mrs. Mapes nodded. Esther suddenly felt herself becoming interested in the conversation; but it was not pursued in this direction, and, feeling weary, she bade the party good night, reminding them that she had to be stirring early.

“Master’s made a mistake,” said Mr. Fanshaw, in an under tone to the housekeeper, during the little movement caused by Esther’s exit, “and took the wrong mumber of the family!”

Mrs. Mapes smiled, and the council, too much interested in their subject to think of separating at present, returned to the discussion.

“Don’t you feel all in a twitter, ma’am?” inquired Dolly.

Mrs. Turnover responded to the effect that “twitter” time was past, and all she was now conscious of, was a sort of heavy settlin’ down.

It occurred to some of the circle that this state of things would shortly become more applicable to the other party to the projected alliance.

It being now universally assumed that Sir George’s suit was to receive a favourable answer, the next consideration was *how* it should be conveyed; and on this point, Mrs. Turnover, after a little coquetting, frankly avowed herself at fault, and invited co-operation.

“I should do it respectfully but cordial,” said Mr. Fanshaw.

Assent, qualified by an unspoken impression that, on such a subject, Mr. Fanshaw should have permitted the ladies to speak first.

“Pop upon him when he leaves his room,” proposed Gertrude. “He’d take it kind.”

“I think I wouldn’t be *too* forward,” said the housekeeper.

“Send word you couldn’t come for orders about dinner, being that you was hupset,” said Dolly.

“I think I wouldn’t be *too backward*,” said Mrs. Mapes.

“Meet him promiscus, and say you’ve loved him these twelve long year, and is it come

to *this?*” was the daring counsel of Martha, the kitchen-maid.

“I won’t do nothin’ o’ the sort,” said the honest-hearted cook, indignantly. “Besides, a precious fool you’d make me out to be, spoonin’ on a little boy in fall-down collars! Catch me saying it.”

“You *must* give master his answer, child,” said Mrs. Mapes, in full enjoyment of the difficulty. “Come, now, rouse yourself, and think about what you’re to say.”

“I won’t say nothin’,” said the cook; “I’ll—I’ll write.”

But this craven resolution was received as it deserved, with manifest disfavour. Nevertheless, the lady was firm. She would reply by letter.

“And slip it under his door,” was one suggestion.

“Or pin it on the breakfast ‘am,” was another.

“Or lay it in a hopen tart,” was a third.

It seemed that the idea of sending such a letter in the ordinary way was not to be dreamed of.

“Well, now, about the letter,” said Mrs. Mapes, settling herself comfortably. “I suppose you don’t want any assistance *there*.”

(In other words, “I know we shall have to do it for you; so now for some fun!”)

Mrs. Turnover declared that she would be greatly obliged for any suggestions:

“The last words Turnover ses to me, so as to be understood distinct,” added the good lady, deliberately, was these: ‘Never, Barbary, never be above hearing adwice that’s freely offered. The best of *that* sort generally is, that you needn’t foller it. Adoo!’”

Far from being deterred by this last qualification, the council plunged at once into the discussion, and a consultation ensued, in which everybody, except Mr. Fanshaw, took part at the same moment. That gentleman, remarking that the subject was becoming delicate, took his departure.

Numerous were the forms of love-letters adduced as precedents, and many interesting quotations—chiefly, it would seem, derived from valentines—imparted a poetic character to the debate. But none of these exactly hit the point. It is not every day that a young baronet of ancient lineage, aged twenty-five, proposes to his cook, of fifty.

“This will never do,” said the lady-president, getting rather weary of the bootless clamour. “Suppose I write down what each or any one has to propose, and we can correct the letter afterwards.”

The proposition was adopted. Paper and ink were produced, and Mrs. Mapes, whose right hand was fortunately effective, commenced the epistle thus:

“Honoured Sir——”

“I don’t know about ‘honoured,’” said Mrs. Turnover. “Don’t it read distant?”

“I thought we were to *write* the letter first,” said the housekeeper. “Now, then—‘Honoured Sir——’”

"'Being as you wished an immediate answer,' suggested Gertrude, and stopped, exhausted.

"'To your ansum propojial,' said Dolly, rushing to the rescue.

"'Made to your umble servant, Barbary Hann Turnover,' prompted Martha.

"'That'll do capital!' cried Mrs. Turnover, thinking the letter finished. "Who's got a seal?"

"'I don't think *that* would satisfy anybody,'" said Mrs. Mapes. "Do you accept, or *don't* you?"

"'Which,' said the lady chiefly interested, making a great effort—"which, if you raily think it's for your 'appiness—'"

"'Happiness'—yes!" said the lady-president.

"'Why, *you* know best,' said the laundry-maid, lightly.

Mrs. Turnover nodded approval.

"Shouldn't you add something about not being fully prepared—you know, unexpected—that sort of thing?" asked the housekeeper.

"'Took by surprige,' resumed the inexecutable Dolly.

"'In my hapron and all,' put in Mrs. Turnover.

"'I might have simmed—have simmed,'" said Gertrude, and again collapsed.

"'More cooler,' suggested Martha.

"'Than suckemstarnes required,' said the laundry-maid, timidly interrogative.

"'But, for the futur, you shan't—you shan't—have no—no—'" hesitated Dolly.

"'No call to complain,' said Mrs. Turnover, desperately. "There, that'll do. I signs it."

"Oh, Mrs. Turnover, ma'am, there's something forgot," said Dolly.

"Forgot?"

"They usually, so they tells me" (Dolly blushed), "sends a lock of 'air."

"Bless my heart, *do* they?" cried the lady.

"Yes, and yours is so beautiful thick! Let me cut off a bit. There, don't be shy, ma'am," said Gertrude, playfully.

"Well, here, hunderneath, wheer it ain't so grey," said Mrs. Turnover, hitching up her cap.

An iron-grey tuft being presently secured and tied—to avoid dangerous contrasts—with white thread.

"Now, listen," said the lady in the chair; "here's the letter." She had made some improvements in the spelling, but retained the sense intact:

"'Honoured Sir. Being as you wished an immediate answer to your handsome proposal made to your humble servant, Barbara Ann Turnover, which, if you really think it's for your happiness, why, *you knows best*. Took by surprise, in my apron and all, I might have seemed more cooler than circumstances required; but, for the future, you shan't have no call to complain.—Yours to command,

"'BARBARA ANN TURNOVER.'

"Well," concluded Mrs. Mapes, "will it do?"

"I don't like 'honoured sir,'" said Mrs. Turnover, returning to her former criticism. "It reads cold, and besides, ma'am, he *didn't* ask for an immediate answer, nor I never said he did."

"Very good, my dear. I cut that out," said Mrs. Mapes.

"Now she needn't put her name theer, since 'tis signed at the end," remarked Dolly.

"*That's* out," said Mrs. Mapes.

"Now, ain't *this* rayerther queer; 'if you raily thinks it's for your happiness, ansetterer,'" said Gertrude. "O' course it's for his happiness, and o' course he know'd it so to be. 'If' sounds humbelieving."

"Truly, ma'am," said Mrs. Turnover.

"*That's* out," said the lady with the pen.

"Mrs. Turnover, ma'am," said the laundry-maid, humbly, "I ask for information. Don't it seem as if 'took by surprise' meant to re-proge him?"

"Good gracious, child! Reproach! Not for any sake!" exclaimed the lady, much disturbed. "Out with it, please, ma'am, quick!"

"It's out," replied the president. "Now about 'the future'?"

"If I were Mrs. Turnover, little enough I'd promise about *that*," said Dolly, darkly. "Fust you see how he beyaves hisself."

"Perhaps you're right, child," said the cook. "The very last horrible words poor Tur—"

"There, *that's* out," interrupted Mrs. Mapes, and she laid down the pen.

"Go on, if you please, 'm," said Mrs. Turnover.

"That's all."

"Why, bless me! what's gone of the letter?" ejaculated Mrs. Turnover, looking at the document in some dismay.

"There's nothing left but 'yours to command,' the name, and the hair," said Mrs. Mapes.

There was a subdued giggle in the assembly at this unexpected result of their labours, but Mrs. Mapes, who was becoming sleepy, comforted them with the assurance that nothing in the world could be better than what still remained. The hair, and the "yours to command," at once announced that the offer was accepted, and that Mrs. Turnover purposed to be a dutiful spouse.

This appearing satisfactory, thanks were presented to Mrs. Mapes for her "able conduct in the chair," and the council separated to their respective apartments, leaving Gosling Graize under the guardianship of the ever-wakeful ancestors, who frowned and smirked below.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I. AT POYNINGS.

LIFE at Poynings had its parallel in hundreds of country-houses, of which it was but a type. It was a life essentially English in its character, in its staid respectability, in its dull decorum. There are old French chateaux without number, visible in bygone days to travellers in the banquettes of diligences, and glimpses of which may still occasionally be caught from the railways, grey, square, four pepper-box turreted old buildings, wherein life is dreary but not decorous, and sad without being staid. It is the day-dream of many an English country gentleman that his house should, in the first place, be respectable, in the second place, comfortable, in the third place, free from damp; after these successes are achieved, he takes no further thought for it: within and without the dulness may be soul-harrowing; that is no affair of his. So long as his dining-room is large enough to contain the four-and-twenty guests who, on selected moonlight nights, are four times in every year bidden to share his hospitality—so long as the important seigniorial dignities derivable from the possession of lodge, and stable, and kennel are maintained—so long as the state devolving upon him as justice of the peace, with a scarcely defined hope of one day arriving at the position of deputy-lieutenant, is kept up, vaulting ambition keeps itself within bounds, and the young English country gentleman is satisfied.

More than satisfied, indeed, was Mr. Capel Carruthers in the belief that all the requirements above named were properly fulfilled. In his earlier life he had been haunted by a dim conviction that he was rather an ass than otherwise; he remembered that that had been the verdict returned at Rugby, and his reflections on his very short career at Cambridge gave him no reason to doubt the decision of his schoolfellows. Not a pleasant source of reflection even to a man of Mr. Carruthers's blunted feelings; in fact, a depressing, wrong, Radical state of mind, for which there was only one antidote—the thought that he was Mr. Carruthers of Poy-

nings, a certain settled stable position which would have floated its possessor over any amount of imbecility. Carruthers of Poynings! There it was in old county histories, with a genealogy of the family and a charming copper engraving of Poynings at the beginning of the century, with two ladies in powder and hoops fishing in an impossible pond, and a gentleman in a cocked-hat and knee-breeches pointing out nothing in particular to nobody at all. Carruthers of Poynings! All the old armour in the hall, hauberks and breastplates, now propped upon a slight wooden frame, instead of enclosing the big chests and the thews and sinews which they had preserved through the contests of the rival Roses or the Cavaliers and Roundheads—all the old ancestors hanging round the dining-room, soldiers, courtiers, Kentish yeomen, staring with grave eyes at the smug white-whiskered old gentleman, their descendant—all the old tapestry worked by Maud Carruthers, whose husband was killed in the service of Mary Stuart—all the carvings and gildings about the house, all the stained glass in the windows, all the arms and quartering and crests upon the family plate—all whispered to the present representative of the family that he was Carruthers of Poynings, and as such had only to make a very small effort to find life no very difficult matter, even for a person scantily endowed with brains. He tried it accordingly—tried it when a young man, had pursued the course ever since, and found it successful. Any latent suspicion of his own want of wisdom had vanished long since, as how, indeed, could it last? When Mr. Carruthers took his seat as chairman of the magisterial bench at Amherst, he found himself listening with great admiration to the prefatory remarks which he addressed to the delinquent in custody before passing sentence on him, unconscious that those remarks only echoed the magistrate's clerk, who stood close behind him whispering into his ear. When, as was his regular custom, he walked round the barn, where, on rent-days, the tenants were assembled at dinner, and heard his health proposed in glowing terms, and drunk with great enthusiasm—for he was a good and liberal landlord—and when he addressed a few conventional words of thanks in reply, and stroked his white whiskers, and bowed, amidst renewed cheering, how should a thought of his own short-comings ever dawn upon him?

His short-comings! the short-comings of Mr. Carruthers of Poynings? If, indeed, in his earlier days there had been a latent belief in the existence of anything so undesirable and so averse to the proper status of a county magnate, it had long since died out. It would have been hard and unnatural, indeed, for a man so universally respected and looked up to, not to give in to the general creed, and admit that there were undoubted grounds for the wide-spread respect which he enjoyed. There are two kinds of "squires," to use the old English word, who exercise equal influence on the agricultural mind, though in very different ways. The one is the type which Fielding loved to draw, and which has very little altered since his time—the jocular sporting man, rib-poking, lass-chin-clucking franklin, the tankard-loving, cross-country-riding, oath-using, broad-skirted, cord-breeched, white-hatted squire. The other is the landed proprietor, magistrate, patron of the living, chairman of the board of guardians, supporter of the church and state, pattern man. Mr. Carruthers of Poynings belonged to the latter class. You could have told that by a glance at him on his first appearance in the morning, with his chin shaved clean, his well-brushed hair and whiskers, his scrupulously white linen, his carefully tied check neckcloth, his portentous collars, his trimmed and polished nails. His very boots creaked of position and respectability, and his large white waistcoat represented unspotted virtue. Looking at him ensconced behind the bright-edged Bible at early morning prayers, the servants believed in the advantages derivable from a correct life, and made an exception in their master's favour to the doom of Dives. By his own measure he meted the doings of others, and invariably arose considerably self-refreshed from the mensuration. Hodge, ploughman, consigned to the cage after a brawl with Giles, hedger, consequent upon a too liberal consumption of flat and muddy ale at The Three Horseshoes, known generally as The Shoes, and brought up for judgment before the bench, pleading "a moog too much" in extenuation, might count on scanty commiseration from the magistrate, who never exceeded his four glasses of remarkably sound claret. Levi Hinde, gipsy and tramp, arraigned for stealing a loaf from a baker's shop—as he said, to save the life of his starving child—impressed not one whit the portly chairman of the Amherst branch of the County Bank. Mr. Carruthers never got drunk, and never committed theft; and that there could be any possible temptation for other people so to act, was beyond the grasp of his most respectable imagination.

A man of his stamp generally shows to the least advantage in his domestic relations. Worshipped from a distance by outsiders, who, when occasion forces them into the presence, approach, metaphorically, in the Siamese fashion, on hands and knees, there is usually a good deal too much Grand Lama-like mystery and dignity

about the recipient of all this homage to render him agreeable to those with whom he is brought into daily contact. Mr. Carruthers was not an exception to the rule. He had a notion that love, except the extremely respectable but rather weak regard, felt by mothers towards their infants, was a ridiculous boy-and-girl sentiment, which never really came to anything, nor could be considered worthy of notice until the feminine mind was imbued with a certain amount of reverence for the object of her affection. Mr. Carruthers had never read Tennyson (in common with his class, he was extremely severe upon poets in general, looking upon them not merely as fools, but as idle mischievous fools, who might be better employed in earning a decent livelihood, say as carters or turnpike-men); but he was thoroughly impressed with the idea that "woman is the lesser man," and he felt that any open display of affection on his part towards his wife might militate against what he considered entirely essential to his domestic happiness—his "being looked up to." He was in the habit of treating his wife in ordinary matters of social intercourse very much as he treated the newly-appointed justice of the peace at the meetings of the magisterial bench, viz. as a person whose position was now recognised by the laws of society as equal to their own, but who must, nevertheless, feel inwardly that between him and Mr. Carruthers of Poynings there was really a great gulf fixed, the bridging of which, however easy it may appear, was really a matter of impossibility.

If these feelings existed, as they undoubtedly did in Mr. Carruthers under the actual circumstances of his marriage, it may be imagined that they would have been much keener, much more intensified, had he taken to wife, instead of the quiet widow lady whom, to the astonishment of the county, he chose, any of the dashing girls who had danced, dressed, and flirted at him perseveringly, but in vain. Poynings was a sufficiently nice place to render its master a catch in the county, and to induce husband-hunting misses to discount his age and pomposity, so that when the cards of Mr. and Mrs. Capel Carruthers were sent round (it was before the contemptuous days of "no cards"), and it was discovered that the new mistress of Poynings was somebody quite out of "the set," immediately "that dear Mr. Carruthers" became "that horrid old thing," and it required years of open-handed hospitality to re-establish him in favour.

But Capel Carruthers had chosen wisely, and he knew it. With all his weakness and vanity, a gentleman in thought and tastes, he had taken for his wife a lady whose birth and breeding must have been acknowledged in any society; a lady whose age was not ill-suited to his own, whose character was unimpeachable, who was thoroughly qualified to superintend the bringing out of his niece, and whose sole vulnerable point for criticism—her poverty—was rendered

invulnerable as soon as she became Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings. And, under all the cold placid exterior which never thawed, under all the set Grandisonian forms of speech which were never relaxed, under the judicial manner and the Board of Guardians address, flowed a warm current of love for his wife which he himself scarcely suspected. With such poor brains as he had, he had occasionally fallen to the task of self-examination, asking himself how it was that he, Mr. Carruthers of Poynings (even in his thoughts he liked the ring of that phrase), could have so far permitted himself to be swayed by any one, and then he told himself that he was revered and looked up to, that his state, position, and dignities were duly acknowledged, and in a satisfied frame of mind he closed the self-colloquy. Loved his wife—oh! neither he nor any one else knew how much. George Dallas need not have been anxious about the treatment of his mother by his step-father. When the young man cursed his exile from his mother's presence and his step-father's home, he little knew the actual motives which prompted Mr. Carruthers to decide upon and to keep rigidly in force that decree of banishment. Not only his step-son's wildness and extravagance: though a purist, Mr. Carruthers was sufficient man of the world to know that in most cases there are errors of youth which correct themselves in the flight of time. Not a lurking fear that his niece, thrown in this prodigal's way, should be dazzled by the glare of his specious gifts, and singe her youth and innocence in their baleful light. Not a dread of having to notice and recognise the young man as his connexion in the chastened arena of county society.

As nature had not endowed Mr. Carruthers with a capacity for winning affection, though it was not to be denied that there were qualities in his character which commanded respect, it was fortunate for him that he cared less about the former than the latter. Nevertheless, he would probably have been rendered very uncomfortable, not to say unhappy, had he supposed that his wife, "Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings," as there is reason to suppose he designated her, even in his inmost thoughts, positively did not love him. Such a supposition, however, never had occurred to him, which was fortunate; for Mr. Carruthers was apt to hold by his suppositions as strongly as other people held by their convictions, as, indeed, being *his*, why should he not? and it would have been very difficult to dislodge such a notion. The notion itself would have been, in the first place, untrue, and in the second dangerous. Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings loved her rather grim and decidedly uninteresting but unimpeachably respectable husband, if not passionately, which was hardly to be expected, very sincerely, and estimated him after the fashion of wives—that is to say, considerably above his deserts. All women like their husbands, except those who notoriously do not, and Mrs. Carruthers was no exception to the

rule. She had a much greater sense of justice in her than most women, and she used it practically—applied it to her own case. She knew the fault had been her son's in the great sorrow which had destroyed all the pride and pleasure which her prosperous marriage would otherwise have brought her, and she did not charge it upon her husband, or, except in so far as her unconquerable anxiety and depression caused him annoyance, did she inflict the penalty of it on him. She knew him to be a hard man, and she did not look for softness from him; but she accepted such advantages as hardness of character possesses, and bore its disadvantages well. "If I were he," she had said to herself, even in the first hours of her anguish of conviction of her boy's unworthiness, and when his step-father's edict of exclusion was but newly published, "and I had so little knowledge of human nature as he has, if life had never taught me toleration, if Clare were my niece, and George his son, would I not have acted as he has done? He is consistent to the justness and the sternness of his character." Thinking thus, Mrs. Carruthers acted on the maxim that to judge others aright we should put ourselves in their position. So she accepted the great trial of her life, and suffered it as quietly and patiently as she could. It would be difficult to define with precision the nature of Mr. Carruthers's sentiments towards George Dallas. The young man had met his step-father but rarely, and had on each occasion increased the disfavour with which from the first the elder man had regarded him. He had never tried to propitiate, had, indeed, regarded him with contemptuous indifference, secure in what he fancied to be the security of his mother's position; and there had been covert antagonism between them from the first. How much astonished Mr. Carruthers would have been had any revelation been made to him of the secrets of his own heart, whereby he would have discovered that a strong sentiment of jealousy lay at the root of his antipathy to George Dallas—jealousy which intensified his hardness and sternness, and forbade him to listen to the promptings of common sense, which told him that the line he was taking towards the son was so cruel to the mother as to neutralise all the advantages presented by the fine marriage she had made, and for which, by the way, he expected her to be constantly demonstratively grateful. In this expectation he was as constantly disappointed. Mrs. Carruthers was an eminently *true* woman, and as she felt no peculiar exuberance of gratitude, she showed none. She was a lady, too—much more perfectly a lady than Mr. Carruthers was unimpeachably a gentleman—and, as such, she filled her position as a matter of course, as she would have filled one much higher, or one much lower, and thought nothing about it. She was of so much finer a texture, so much higher a nature than her husband, that she did not suspect him of any double motive in his treatment of George Dallas. She never dreamed that

Mr. Carruthers of Poynings was secretly un- easily jealous of the man who had died in his prime many years before, and the son, who had been first the young widow's sole consolation and then her bitterest trial. The living and the dead combined to displease Mr. Carruthers, and he would have been unequivocally glad, only in decorous secrecy, could he have obtained any evidence to prove that George Dallas was remarkably like his father in all the defective points of his personal appearance and in all the faults of his character. But such evidence was not within his reach, and Mr. Carruthers was reduced to hoping in his secret heart that his suppositions were correct on this point, and discovering a confirmation of them in his wife's scrupulous silence with regard to her first husband. She had never, in their most confidential moments, remarked on any likeness between George and his father; had never, indeed, mentioned Captain Dallas at all, which appeared extremely significant to Mr. Carruthers, but, seeing that Captain Dallas had been dead twelve years when his widow became Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings, would not have occasioned much surprise to the world in general. Mr. Carruthers regarded himself as his wife's benefactor, but she did not partake of his views in that respect. The notion which he entertained of his position with regard to his niece Clare was better founded and more reasonable.

The beautiful young heiress, who was an unconscious and involuntary element in the standing grievance of Mrs. Carruthers's life, was the only child of Mr. Carruthers's brother, and the sole inheritor of his property. Her father had died while she was a little child, and her mother's method of educating her has been already described. She was attached to her uncle, but was afraid of him; and she was happier and more at ease at the Sycamores than at Poynings. Of course Mr. Carruthers did not suspect his niece of any such depravity of taste. It never occurred to him that any one could fancy himself or herself happier anywhere on the face of the created globe than at Poynings; and so Clare escaped the condemnation which she would otherwise have received in no stinted measure.

Accustomed to attach a wonderful amount of importance to duties and responsibilities which were his, if their due fulfilment could add to his dignity and reputation, Mr. Carruthers was a model of the uncle and guardian. He really liked Clare very much indeed, and he was fully persuaded that he loved her—a distinction he would have learned to draw only if Clare had been deprived of her possessions, and rendered dependent on him. He spoke of her as "my brother's heiress," and so thought of her, not as "my brother's orphan child;" but in all external and material respects Mr. Carruthers of Poynings was an admirable guardian, and a highly respectable specimen of the uncle tribe. He would have been deeply shocked had he dis-

covered that any young lady in the county was better dressed, better mounted, more obsequiously waited upon, more accomplished, or regarded by society as in any way more favoured by fortune than Miss Carruthers—not of Poynings, indeed, but the next thing to it, and likely at some future day to enjoy that distinction. Mr. Carruthers did not regret that he was childless; he had never cared for children, and, though not a keenly observant person, he had noticed occasionally that the importance of a rich man's heir was apt, in this irrepressibly anticipative world, to outweigh the importance of the rich man himself. No Carruthers on record had ever had a large family, and, for his own part, he liked the idea of a female heir to the joint property of himself and his brother, who should carry her own name in addition to her husband's. He was determined on that. Unless Clare married a nobleman, her husband should take the name of Carruthers. Carruthers of Poynings must not die out of the land. The strange jealousy which was one of the underlying constituents of Mr. Carruthers's character came into play with regard to his niece and his wife. Mrs. Carruthers loved the girl, and would gladly have acted the part of a mother to her; and as Clare's own mother had been a remarkably mild specimen of maternal duty and affection, she could have replaced that lady considerably to Clare's advantage. But she had soon perceived that this was not to be; her husband's fidgety sense of his own importance, his ever-present fear lest it should be trenched upon or in any way slighted, interfered with her good intentions. She knew the uselessness of opposing the foible, though she did not understand its source, and she relinquished the projects she had formed.

Mr. Carruthers was incapable of believing that his wife never once dreamed of resenting to Clare the exclusion of George, for which the girl's residence at Poynings had been assigned as a reason, or that she would have despised herself if such an idea had presented itself to her mind, as she probably must have despised him had she known how natural and inevitable he supposed it to be on her part.

Thus it came to pass that the three persons who lived together at Poynings had but little real intimacy or confidence between them. Clare was very happy; she had her own tastes and pursuits, and ample means of gratifying them. Her mother's brother and his wife, Sir Thomas and Lady Boldero, with her cousin, their ugly but clever and charming daughter, were much attached to her, and she to them, and, when she got away from Poynings to the Sycamores, Clare acknowledged to herself that she enjoyed the change very much, but was very happy at Poynings nevertheless. The Sycamores had another interest for her now, another association, and the girl's life had entered upon a new phase. Innocent, inexperienced, and romantic as she was, inclined to hero-worship, and by no

means likely to form sound opinions as to her heroes, Clare Carruthers was endowed with an unusual allowance of common sense and perception. She understood Mr. Carruthers of Poynings thoroughly; so much more thoroughly than his wife, that she had found out the jealousy which permeated his character, and recognised it in action with unflinching accuracy. She had considerably more tact than girls at her age ordinarily possess, and she continued to fill a somewhat difficult position with satisfaction not only to others, but to herself. She contrived to avoid wounding her uncle's susceptible self-love, and to keep within the limits which Mrs. Carruthers's discretion had set to their intimacy, without throwing external coldness or restraint into their relations.

Clare found herself very often doing or not doing, saying or refraining from saying, some particular thing, in order to avoid "getting Mrs. Carruthers into a scrape," and of course she was aware that the constantly-recurring necessity for such carefulness argued, at the least, a difficult temper to deal with in the head of the household; but she did not let the matter trouble her much. She would think, when she thought about it at all, with the irrepressible self-complacency of youth, how careful *she* would be not to marry an ill-tempered man, or, at all events, she would make up her mind to marry a man so devotedly attached to her that his temper would not be of the slightest consequence, as, of course, she should never suffer from it. On the whole, it would be difficult to find a more dangerous condition of circumstances than that in which Clare Carruthers was placed when her romantic meeting with Paul Ward took place—a meeting in which the fates seemed to have combined every element of present attraction and future danger. Practically, Clare was quite alone; she placed implicit confidence in no one, she had no guide for her feelings or actions, and she had just drifted into a position in which she needed careful direction. She had refrained from mentioning her meeting with the stranger, more on Mrs. Carruthers's account than on her own, from the usual motive—apprehension lest, by some unreasonable turn of Mr. Carruthers's temper, she might be brought "into a scrape." Her curiosity had been strongly excited by the discovery that Mrs. Carruthers had some sort of acquaintance with Paul Ward, or, at least, with his name; but she adhered to her resolution, and kept silence for the present.

Mrs. Carruthers's son had always been an object of tacit interest to Clare. She had not been fully informed of the circumstances of her uncle's marriage, and she understood vaguely that George Dallas was an individual held in disfavour by the august master of Poynings; so her natural delicacy of feeling conquered her curiosity, and she abstained from mentioning George to his mother or to Mr. Carruthers, and also from giving encouragement to the

gossip on the subject which occasionally arose in her presence.

In Mrs. Carruthers's dressing-room a portrait hung, which Clare had been told by Mrs. Brookes was that of her mistress's son, when a fine, brave, promising boy ten years old. Clare had felt an interest in the picture, not only for Mrs. Carruthers's sake, but because she liked the face which it portrayed—the clear bright brown eyes, the long curling hair, the brilliant dark complexion, the bold, frank, gleeful expression. Once or twice she had said a few words in praise of the picture, and once she had ventured to ask Mrs. Carruthers if her son still resembled it. The mother had answered her, with a sigh, that he was greatly changed, and no one would now recognise the picture as a likeness of him.

The dignified and decorous household at Poynings pursued its luxurious way with less apparent disunion among its principal members than is generally to be seen under the most favourable circumstances, but with little real community of feeling or of interest. Mrs. Carruthers was a popular person in society, and Clare was liked as much as she was admired. As for Mr. Carruthers, he was Mr. Carruthers of Poynings, and that fact sufficed for the neighbourhood almost as completely as it satisfied himself.

The unexpected return of her uncle from York had caused Clare no particular emotion. She was standing at the French window of the breakfast-room, feeding a colony of birds, her out-door pensioners, when the carriage made its appearance. She had just observed the fact, and was quietly pursuing her occupation, when Mrs. Carruthers, who had left the breakfast-room half an hour before, returned, looking so pale, and with so unmistakable an expression of terror in her face, that Clare looked at her in astonishment.

"Your uncle has come back," she said. "I am not well, I cannot meet him yet. Go to the door, Clare, and tell him I am not well, and am still in my room. Pray go, my dear; don't delay a moment."

"Certainly I will go," answered Clare, leaving the window and crossing the room as she spoke; "but—"

"I'll tell you what ails me another time, but go now—go," said Mrs. Carruthers; and, without another word, the girl obeyed her. She had seen the carriage at a turn in the avenue; now the wheels were grinding the gravel of the sweep opposite the hall door. In a minute Clare was receiving her uncle on the steps, and Mrs. Carruthers, having thrown the bonnet and shawl she had just taken out for her proposed expedition to the shrubbery back into the wardrobe, removed her gown, and replaced it by a dressing-gown, was awaiting her husband's approach with a beating heart and an aching head. Had he met her son? Had he passed him unseen upon the road? Would Mrs. Brookes succeed, unseen and unsuspected, in executing the commission with which she had hurriedly charged her?

"She is in a scrape of some sort," Clare thought, as she accompanied her uncle to his wife's dressing-room. "What can have happened since he left home? Can it have anything to do with Paul Ward?"

IN PRAISE OF A ROTTEN BOARD.

I've been a metropolitan guardian these twenty years, and I say the fuss that's being made about paupers is dis—graceful. I know them root and branch, as you may say, and a more ignorant idle vicious worthless lot I'll defy you to point out. Coddle 'em, and they'll turn on you; be kind to 'em, and they'll cheat you to your very face; try to find 'em employment, and they'll pretend they're too old or too weakly to get on with it. Arm-cheers and drawing-rooms, that's what they're all hankering after, and if you don't give it 'em, you're abused in the papers, and called cruel and heartless by a parcel of fellows who are paid to write respectable tradesmen like us down. Why, I'll warrant that if you was to go over our workhouse this very minute, you'd find there's hardly a soul in it who's any business to be there. Extravagance, or drunkenness, or worse, that's what brings people on the parish; and I say it would be flying in the face of Providence to make them too comfortable, or to listen to their whims and grumblings. We sit at this here board to prevent people dying of starvation; *that's* our duty, and the moment we go beyond it, why, we're robbing the people that send us here, by burdening the rates. Don't talk to me of common humanity to the sick and old. I'm as humane as any man, in reason, but if you once begin this messing and coddling system with paupers, where is it to end? Every other house in London a workhouse, and arm-cheers and drawing-rooms in 'em, every one. That's what it would come to, mark my words, and I've seen something of these matters through having been a guardian so long.

And we want to know, too, who's to pay for all these fine improvements. We don't mean to, I tell you flatly, and if you think by calling us names to make us budge an inch from what we say, you don't know your men. A pretty talk there's been about sick wards, and doctors' salaries, and trained nurses, and casual poor. Why, if guardians were paid large salaries for looking after things, there couldn't be more hard names thrown at their heads. I've read most of this stuff, and I've shown it to my fellow-guardians when we've met to smoke a pipe at the Beadle's Head, but none of us have made out exactly what's expected of us. Arm-cheers and drawing-rooms, nurses to fiddle after 'em, and doctors to send physie whenever their little fingers ache, that's what the paupers are to have when this blessed new system becomes law; but what the guardians are to do, unless it's to wash their feet and tuck 'em up in bed, is more than we can tell. Idleness and extravagance is to land a man in the workhouse, and

when he's there he's to be petted as if he was something out o' the common, and deserved pampering at our expense. Don't talk to me of sickness constituting a claim, or of a man being entitled to proper assistance, if he's entitled to assistance at all, because that's cant, and cant is a thing I hate. We have a medical officer, and he's bargained to supply medicine and attendance for a certain sum a year. I dare say he doesn't think it enough. I've noticed that very few people do think they're paid according to their merits; and I'm sure if you were to ask any man sitting at this board whether he wouldn't like his shop to do better, he'd say yes. Trade is often very dull, and by the hardest work and the closest attention many of us manage to make both ends meet, but that's all. Besides, everybody would like to be better off than they are. It's human nature, and I for one ain't above owning it. But what I say is this: a bargain's a bargain, and if Medical Officer Esquire thinks he's so very hardly used, why did he ask us to give him the situation, for which there were plenty of applicants, and would be again, if he likes to leave? However, we don't want to be hard upon him, and we've made allowances whenever a troublesome case has turned up, and a pauper's died, and there's been an inquest, with an impertinent verdict about neglect. We've known that the salary given by the parish wasn't enough to keep the doctor, and we never pretended it was, so we've not looked for impossibilities, but have let him have as much private practice as he could get. What he's felt called upon to do for the workhouse, he's done; but I defy him to say that any guardian in the parish ever bothered him or asked a question until he got bitten with these new-fangled notions, and wanted to raise the roofs, and recommended day-rooms, and paid nurses, and exercise-yards, and a lot of other things, which we've done very well without, so far, and which we mean to do without, in spite of all the twaddle written and spoken.

Of course, we warn't a-going to be bearded by our own officer, so after giving the doctor rope for a little while, we up and plainly let him see we weren't to be gammoned into wasting this union's money, and that he might go on recommending until he was black in the face, before we'd allow ourselves to be bullied into doing more than we thought proper. Hadn't the Poor Law Board been telling us for years that five hundred cubic feet of air was the proper quantity for every inmate? And wasn't it a piece of presumption in a parish doctor, because he'd read a few one-sided books, to get up and say "the highest scientific authorities are against you and against the Poor Law Board, gentlemen, and I feel it my duty to tell you that a space of less than one thousand feet of air to each sick bed is highly injurious and improper"? Were we to put up with this kind of conceit; when the doctor knew as well as we did that the Poor Law Board had the size of our wards, and the number of people they held, sent in to their office regularly, and that they'd

never seen occasion to find fault? My own opinion is that the Poor Law Board is as disgusted as we are, and that it will be even with these troublesome meddlers yet. For the doctor's last move has been to join what he calls a Parochial Medical Officers' Association, which meets, and reports, and insults the guardians, and passes its opinions upon Poor Law inspection in a way that would astonish you. But this association, bless you, is only got up to extort money. The doctors have got it into their heads that they're underpaid, and they suppose, by bringing what they call "moral pressure to bear upon the guardians," they'll have their salaries increased. It seems funny, doesn't it, that when they're crying out about neglect and inhumanity, they should blame the guardians, who've scarcely ever interfered except in preventing extravagance, and shouldn't see that what takes place in a workhouse can't be known to men who've their own business to look after, and who wouldn't be able to attend the weekly board meeting if it weren't good for business, and led up to contracts and odds and ends of profit, very useful to hard-working family men? If anybody's to blame, you'd think it was those who's had salaries for looking after the poor, wouldn't you? Visiting committees and reporting in writing to the Poor Law Board? Why, of course we do all that, and a great nuisance it is. How do we do it? We take it in turns, two or three at a time, to walk over the house with the master, and we write "Yes," or "No," opposite some questions in a printed book, and come away. A mere form? Why, of course it is; what's the use of asking foolish questions like that? No, I can't say that I ever heard of anybody finding anything wrong, and I've looked through the visiting-books of other parishes besides ours, and it was the same there. It's always looked upon as a form, and nothing else. Our workhouse holds over a thousand people, and if you think guardians have time to peep under every bed and pry into every corner, why you don't know what business is, and what a difficult thing it is to give up as many hours a week as we do to our duty and the parish. This visiting ain't meant to be anything but a form. Why, I've heard a Poor Law inspector say myself, that he *never* found anything in a visiting-book, except that all was right and everybody doing well. Now it stands to reason that, if more reporting was wanted, we should have been told so; for the Poor Law Board must have known by the returns always being favourable, what guardians thought about it.

But I'm glad to think that what I call the coddlers are thrown over, and that a healthier style o' speaking's coming in. There's St. George's Workhouse, now, down Southwark way; no name was too bad for it a short time ago. That nasty prying Lancet said it was surrounded by "every possible nuisance, physical and moral." Those were the words. "Classification there was none," it said, and "the ventilation was very ineffectual, and the

musty smell of the wards suggested a mischievous state of things. The grossest carelessness and neglect in the wards, an absence of decency and needful cleanliness in the infirmary, drunkenness among the nurses, all of which were paupers, and a scale of diet which starved people, whether sick or well." That's what I find in the Lancet report, which I've just looked up. Well, then: when the two inspectors went there from the Poor Law Board, a short time since, they found the same sort of faults; and I'm told, had the impudence to call it the worst workhouse in London, barring Clerkenwell. Remembering this, I must say it was gratifying to find that the Poor Law Board wasn't satisfied with this sort of nonsense, and had it inspected again.

When I heard they were goin' to do this, it showed me that we were to have a different sort of game to what we'd been treated to; and, as I told Paunchby, at the Beadle, the very night I heard of it, the Poor Law Board don't mean to give way, and quite right of the Board; for they've made a new inspector, and brought another up from Lancashire, and, I've no doubt, told them not to be led away by the nonsense the other fellows had listened to, and, above all, not to follow in the footsteps of him as was sent away. The new inspector seems a gentleman, and not given to the unreasonable inconsiderate foolishness about paupers and feet of air, or paupers and trained nurses, or paupers and exercise-grounds; for when he'd been to St. George's he told a very different story to what those Lancet fellows and the Whitehall inspectors who'd been there before him did. Very comfortable and proper and everything requisite—that's the sort of note *he* put in writing before he left; and I'd like to know who'd have the impudence to ask for a change, or for hospitals, in the face of that! This gentleman's a physician, too, and his inspection ought to satisfy everybody that there's a deal of nonsense written about air and smells, and such-like. There's bone-boilers and grease and catgut manufactories all round St. George's Workhouse, and the smell from them all is pretty strong at times. It's well known that the things such a fuss was made about, are pretty much as they were; so it proves to me that the Poor Law Board ain't going to be led by the nose, but has just given its new inspectors what we call "the office" to make the best of things, and not go washing every bit of dirty linen away from home. You may depend upon it, Paunchby, I says, that gentlemen who could say of Clerkenwell that all the paupers seemed very comfortable, "under the circumstances," are gentlemen and no mistake, and that we shan't have any bother or trouble with them. It was a genteel pleasant way of putting it, but no more than what we've a right to expect, considering their salaries are paid out of the taxes we help to make up. There's no denying that our own workhouse ain't quite what it ought to be. It's too crowded, and there ain't enough accommodation room; but it's one thing to admit this in a friendly

way, as I do now, and to have it thrust at one as if it was a fault we ought to have seen after before. If you could tell us any plan of keeping down our poor, we'd be very glad to follow it. We had much rather the workhouse wasn't so full, but to build another, or to increase the amount of out-door relief, would be just inviting paupers in from other parishes to be kept and clothed out of our rates. We consider we do our fair share; we pay far more in proportion than the parishes where the fine gentlemen live who abuse us, and it ain't likely that we shall do more for nasty lazy paupers than we're actually obliged. My great faith is in the Poor Law Board, for I'm bound to say it's never been troublesome or worriting, and that as long as our clerk acknowledged its letters as received, it hasn't often asked or seen what we thought of its instructions, or whether they were obeyed. In our parish, we generally move that the letter from the Poor Law Board be acknowledged, or that it lie on the table; and we find this answer every purpose. They're very pretty letter-writers, too, and mostly use plenty of respectful words. When addressing us, they, "only hope we shall agree with them," or "trust we shall see the propriety of considering," or "are inclined to recommend that the guardians should bestow attention, with a view of forming an opinion which shall conduce to an arrangement;" so that it doesn't much matter whether we agree with them or not. It stands to reason that we're not really going to be taught how to manage our own poor by the people at Whitehall, and, as I once told an inspector when he was expressing himself rather too freely about our want of casual wards, "We don't fancy the Poor Law Board will last much longer, sir, so we don't trouble ourselves too much about it." It gives guardians a proper hold over those government-office fellows when their places and their salaries are all temporary, and what they call their department has to be granted two or three or perhaps five years' more life by the House of Commons. That's just what it's been with the Poor Law Board, and our clerk and me have often had a quiet laugh at the way the letters would become flowerier and flowerier as the time drew near for it to be renewed. They've been very soft and silky lately, and no wonder. The Poor Law Board knows as well as I do that it's dependent upon the guardians, and that the guardians ain't one bit dependent upon It, and that if there was much more of such interference as we suffered from a short time since, we'd do away with it altogether. It ain't for me to say what the department's for. I didn't make it; but I know it's not going to put its nose into matters that don't concern it, and we don't mean to be lectured or blustered over for all the paupers in the world. But I don't want to write anything rude or unkind, for, as I have been saying, the style of the secretary's letters, as well as the reports of the new inspectors, all shows that the Poor Law Board is coming to its senses again. The Houseless

Poor Act upset it first, and the shameful way in which the newspapers took up the dirty tramps as if they was heroes, and in the end made us take them in, made some of the people at Whitehall fancy we were to be managed as if we was children. Let them try it, that's all. They'll find this child rather a stiff customer to deal with, I'll promise them. But I've no dislike to the Poor Law Board as long as it keeps its place, and, though I don't pretend to understand its use, and could tell you plenty of funny stories as to the way it's said one thing at one time and another at another, still, so long as it doesn't pretend to authority over guardians, and will give nice civil pleasant reports of what it sees, it may go on as long as it likes, for me.

There never was a better thing than that speech of Mr. Hardy's, just after Lord Derby had said the present treatment of the poor was disgusting. He was so very bouncible and confident that he could order about as he liked, that one would have fancied he'd have set about it at once, and when I read it to a few of my fellow-guardians we agreed that we'd caught a Tartar. But he's been as quiet as a lamb ever since, and it's plain from what's been said that the new president's listened to reason, and knows it wouldn't answer to attack guardians. We feel quite easy about the whole affair. There'll be a good deal more loud talk in parliament; the Lancet people and their hangers-on will have another public meeting or two; the newspapers will be full of moral articles and abuse of guardians; the Poor Law Board will explain that they'll be very close in their inquiries for the future; and the matter will gradually drop, and we shall be let alone. It's not as if this was the first time there's been this sort of bother about the same trumpery, and guardians have only to be firm to upset all the plottings of the people who are so determined to bring local self-government into contempt, that they'd find fault if you were to feed paupers on sugar-plums, and clothe them in satins and lace. This ain't France, however, and we are not going to be bullied out of our rights because a few paupers are not as happy as they'd like to be. Let them work and support themselves, as all honest people should, and nobody would object to their being comfortable as they liked. We've been saddled with double the number of tramps and vagrants we used to have before, through what's called humanity. The end of it will be, I suppose, that the refuges will shut up, and the workhouses will have to take everybody in that chooses to be destitute at night. I don't care whether the people formerly lying in the parks and streets are relieved or not. I say it's a shame that a workhouse should have to take in idle vagrants, and that they'd better be handed over to the police. Let the people who profess so much interest in the houseless poor look at our casual ward at night, and they'll see how many young able-bodied fellows are resting there. Do we enforce the task of work? I sup-

pose so. The master sees to that; we don't. No, I don't consider preventing a few deaths from starvation in the winter, is a sufficient reason for encouraging vagrancy, and I don't think we ought to be called upon to do it. Why don't they have large district wards, or send them to prison? I don't care what they do, so long as they keep away from us; for there's neither credit nor pleasure to be got out of that sort of work, and it isn't fair to thrust it on the guardians.

However, there's a better spirit coming in, and the Poor Law Board is now asking us what we'd like to give the police a week for having acted as assistant relieving officers. I call that respectful and proper. Of course the police don't like the work, it ain't natural they should; but, for my part, I think it's no use doing the thing by halves, and I mean to propose that the Poor Law Board be told to give the casuals over to the police altogether before we settle what shall be paid. And the more I reflect on the turn things have taken lately, the more reason I see to be satisfied. That Mr. Ernest Hart, he's got a nice snubbing from the Shoreditch board about his cock-and-bull stories of ill-treatment. He and his precious association dug up a fine story, told by a pauper, of cruelties committed in that house, and passed resolutions, and wrote to the Poor Law Board as bumptious as you please. Now, if the president had wanted to be mischievous, he might have given the Shoreditch people a deal of trouble. The Strand Union, and Rotherhithe, and Paddington got prettily called over the coals for things that had been reported in the same way by this association. Shoreditch was a much worse case than any of 'em, according to Mr. Hart. But the Poor Law Board managed it beautifully, and in a way that was a credit to 'em. They wrote one of their kind friendly letters to the guardians, and just hinted that they'd better get up some sort of inquiry among themselves, and send in an answer at their convenience. Well, of course the guardians weren't a-going to cry stinking fish, so they had one or two of the paupers in and talked it all over with the master, who was accused wrongfully, and the Poor Law Board got the answer it wanted, and then told the troublesome association that what was complained of took place a long time ago, and that the Board "could not be expected" to order any further inquiry, now that the guardians said it was all right. The examination by the guardians had been all fair and aboveboard, mind you. Everything was gone into, but it was arranged so cleverly that no independent witnesses were called, so that the pauper fellow had no chance of making his insolent assertions good. His "unsupported testimony," as the clerk wrote, wasn't worth listening to; so the whole storm in a teacup concluded with a pitch into Mr. Hart, in print, about his "fertile imagination."

This is the way these interfering nuisances should be always treated; and if the Poor Law Board and the guardians are only true to each other, they may snap their fingers at them all.

And, mind you, it's for both their interests to keep quiet. I'm not a spiteful man myself; live and let live is my motto. BUT IF THERE'S ANY ATTEMPT MADE TO REDUCE OUR PRIVILEGES, I'LL DO MY BEST TO EXPOSE THE POOR LAW BOARD, AND INSIST ON KNOWING WHAT IT DOES FOR ALL THE MONEY IT COSTS. And I dare say, when parliament meets, some busybody will be inquiring what reform's been made.

Mr. Hardy was so very fast at first about his not taking any holidays, and about the law being sufficient for its purpose, and the control over guardians being all right, that the coddlers thought they'd got a prize card, and were all up in the stirrups at once. The association waited on him, and the newspapers praised him for promising not to patch up the present system—which was right enough, for it wants neither patching nor alteration, as far as I can see, only they thought he meant he would rather destroy than patch; and some of the weak-minded among the guardians were really frightened. I thought we should have had some bother, but I wasn't a bit afraid; for we'd have fought it out, and the Court of Queen's Bench decided in our favour when we put the Poor Law Board there before, and would again. For the beauty of it all is, that when it comes to quoting acts of parliament two can play at that game.

There's a rather well-known man, Mr. Chadwick, has just told the public that when he and a few friends settled the new Poor Law, they provided against any such common creatures as guardians exercising responsible authority in its administration. But Mr. Chadwick only holloas because he's out of the wood himself, and knows as well as I do that there are other acts of parliament which prevent his oppressive and, I must say, unconstitutional and un-English measure being kept. Did he himself ever venture to thoroughly carry out what he now says is the law, when he was at the Poor Law Board; and if he did, how did he succeed? Why, I can tell my brother-guardians, not at all. The whole thing is a farce. They can no more put us down, or interfere with us in reality, than we can claim their salaries on quarter-day. If we get to loggerheads, they've more to lose than we have, and they know that, bless you, as well as I do. We hold the purse-strings, that's what gives us the pull; and when we met at St. James's Hall we contrived to show our teeth a bit, and not without effect.

Should I like to have a qualified officer of the Poor Law Board sit at our board once a month or so to guide us by advice? No, I should not, and I'll tell you why. He'd be certain to interfere when he wasn't wanted to, and he'd encourage the fellows we can easily keep under now, but who'd become more troublesome than ever if they was backed up. It's rather amusing than not, to have a fine circular letter, and to tell it to lie on the table till we want it. But if anybody from the Poor Law Board was to be with us, and to hear our arguments, and watch our committees, and see who got the

parish contracts, and how out-door relief is given, and which regulations we observe, why, there'd be no peace, and I wouldn't give a thank you to be guardian at all. The young men, too, who've been elected lately, and who're always wanting to introduce some novelty, would be unbearable. They'd be introducing newspaper notions, and if the Poor Law Board officer was a coddler, he'd help them, and we should have the arm-cheers and drawing-rooms carried in spite of ourselves. Of course, if we could be quite sure of our man, and knew that he'd behave himself, and not pick holes, it wouldn't so much matter; but you couldn't guarantee this. I'm for local self-government and for keeping paupers in their places; and I'd like all guardians to be elected for life, same as at Clerkenwell. Look how independently they can behave there. Why, it was only the other day they provided any casual wards at all, and they didn't do it then for the Poor Law Board, but because their workhouse master foolishly let in a newspaper fellow, and Mr. Kinnaird and Lord Burghley asked questions in the House of Commons about what the fellow wrote. The guardians only gave way because they were tired of being abused. When they did provide accommodation for casuals, they gave strict orders that no visitor was to be let within their workhouse, or into any place connected with it for the future, unless he came from the Poor Law Board, or had an order from themselves. So they've been free from annoyance ever since. You don't read now of "The Clerkenwell guardians again," and such-like rubbish. Why? Because they've had the manliness to stand on their rights and to slam the door in the public's face, as guardians ought to do.

Now, if you think because I've demeaned myself for once by writing all this in a periodical, instead of speaking it out in my own board-room, that I'm only a make-believe guardian, you're very much mistaken. I have expressed the same sentiments in almost the same words over and over again at our board, as my brother-guardians can testify. It doesn't matter whether my name is Whitechapel, or St. George's, Hanover-square, or Lambeth, or St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, or Holborn Union, or Bermondsey, or St. Olave's, Southwark, or any of the parishes, or whether my name is a combination of them all. I'm not ashamed of my opinions; I've repeated them often enough and publicly enough, and I'm ready to do so again. I've no fear of any of these precious schemes for reforming workhouses or reforming boards of guardians coming to anything in either your time or mine. The Poor Law Board knows what it's about. Medical officers, Sick Poor Associations, Lancets, Ernest Harts, and what's now called "public opinion," but what I call public impudence, may just do their best and their worst. We don't mean to coddle paupers; we don't mean to find 'em arm-cheers and drawing-rooms; we don't mean to throw the rates away on nursing; we don't mean to raise

the doctor's salary, nor to get him an assistant; but we do mean, with the help of the present Poor Law Board, to get rid of that pestilent Houseless Poor Act, and to keep our workhouses closed against those precious vagrants, with a permanent ticket, "These casual wards are full," as in the good old times.

A BUNCH OF QUAYS.

IN my youth, being very fond of theatrical entertainments, and somewhat restricted in my means of indulging therein, I naturally held in great esteem those magic slips of paper bearing the legend, "Admit two. Boxes. Before seven," which are generously bestowed on the deserving by theatrical managers, by some actors, by a few newspaper editors, and by a vast number of mysterious people in London who never give away anything but orders, but who always have orders to give away; though why *they* should be the dispensers of dramatic Open Sesames is more than I can for the life of me conceive. I have known, for example, Pilchard (who says he has chambers in Gray's Inn, but who was never yet known to be at home when called upon) twenty years. I have known Pilchard to be without money, without credit, without a dinner, almost without a shirt, but I never knew him to be destitute of a private box. Stay! Once he confessed that he had given away three boxes that afternoon, and must beg me to be content with a couple of stalls. He calls orders "paper." "Do you want any paper?" asks Pilchard. It is his preparatory plea for holding you by the button, and borrowing, eventually, one pound three and sixpence. He never borrowed a sum without fractions in his life. The fractions float the loan, as a sail does a tide. "There's plenty of paper for the Lane going about," says Pilchard, grasping a handful of orders, gleefully; or, "They'll never do anything at the Garden this season. O'Roshers has set his face against paper. Did you ever hear of such an absurdity?" On paper wings this good fellow has skimmed lightly over poverty and insolvency, and that Isle of Dogs to which, without paper to break his fall, he must have gone irretrievably, years ago.

I ran, young, in a theatrical groove; but there were times when I could not procure orders—not even pit orders, from the greengrocers and tobaccoists, who are rewarded, in paper, by the acting manager for masking their railings with the bills of the day. I am afraid I lacked the faculty of the order-hunter, which is a special faculty, and, directed into other channels, might bring the hunter fame and fortune. Energy, perseverance, cheerfulness under discouragement, and the impudence of the dun, are all necessary to him who would never be short of orders. Pilchard might have been Right Honourable, and might have sat in high places, and been the idol of a Defence and Testimonial Fund, had he shown half the strong will and admirable dexterity in earn-

ing an honest livelihood which he displayed in hunting for orders. When I could not get any paper, and I had any pocket-money, I paid. Many are the two shillings I have economised for a place in the gallery, to see Mr. Farren and Mrs. Glover in the *Love Chase*, or Mr. Macready and Miss Helen Faucit in *Virginius*. There are few boys but would cheerfully give up their dinner or their bed to be able to go to the play. Being poor, and not exactly seeing my way to an estate in Somersetshire or the embassy to Samarcand, I was not, I fear, in those days exempt from the passion of envy. I envied Pilchard, with his perennial private boxes. Pilchard was then my patron, though he occasionally borrowed one pound three and sixpence from my mamma. I envied the greengrocers and tobacconists so liberally provided with pit orders by the acting management. I envied the ruddy children of the Duke of York's School and the Licensed Victuallers' Asylum, who, at Christmas and Easter, were hospitably invited to witness the pantomimes and spectacles gratuitously, and were presented, in addition, with buns and seed-cake. I envied the critics of the newspapers who could walk in and out of every theatre in London, and could insist upon front rows, and be haughty to the boxkeepers without giving them sixpence. How, with cold glazed basilisk eyes those boxkeepers would freeze the hearts of little boys when they came in with orders for two, and brought their grown-up sister with them! There was such a Cerberus, with such eyes, but with a face like that of a petrified codfish, at the old Olympic. He never could find the key to open the door of the box, until I had found my last poor little sixpence, or had borrowed one from my sister. I was always afraid he would say that it was after seven, or that the house was full. Well do I remember his sepulchral "Like a bill, sir?" for latent in his speech I seemed to read, "I call you sir, because I want your sixpence; but I know you to be a contemptible young cub, and, but for my greed of gain, I would chuck yer down them stairs." A horrible race, ghouls, in short, and vampires. They are always promising to die out, but, the praiseworthy efforts of Mr. Webster and Mr. Fechter notwithstanding, the bloodsucking boxkeeper does *not* die.

The Being, however, whom I envied most was the renter. Surely, I thought, he must be the happiest man alive. The renter of Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatre in a golden age, like the poet, was born. So, at least, I thought. Long years since he had emptied out his money-bags, and bought an actual and visible piece of Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatre. Was "paper" scarce, or was it a drug in the market, it mattered nothing to him. He was invulnerable both to the caprices of managers and the exigencies of that season of taboo when the free list was suspended, the public press excepted. He was the privileged one, the dweller on the threshold, the alumnus of the penetralia; the adept, the initiated grand and past master of dramatic illuminati; the fortunate one who

could go to the play for nothing whenever he liked. There were legends current among us boys that the renter, even when the theatre was closed, had a right to sit in the empty boxes, monarch of all he surveyed; that the stage doorkeeper had instructions never to stop a renter; that he could claim a portion of the twelfth cake and the bowl of bishop bequeathed by solemn will and testament as an annual regale to the frequenters of the green room of at least one patent theatre. I remember an old gentleman, popularly called Romeo Coates, being pointed out to me as a renter, possessing untold shares. It was said that he likewise owned the greater part of Waterloo-bridge. Twice happy man, to be free of the stalls of old Drury and entitled to pass untaxed from Wellington-street to the Waterloo-road. As I grew older, it happened that the British drama sensibly declined. It has since given up the ghost entirely, and come to life again, but once more threatens dissolution. They say, when at its lowest ebb, renters' shares were to be had cheap. I remember one being sold at Garraway's, I think—it was when the drama had reached the wild beast phase, and before it got to the trained dogs and monkeys—for three guineas. Goodness knows that I had not sixty-three shillings to spare in those days; but could I have earned, or begged, or borrowed the money, I should have gone down to Garraway's and had a bid for the precious share.

Are there any renters now-a-days? Is there any annual twelfth night regale in the green room anywhere? Are there any patent theatres? Is Pilchard alive, or has he retired to his last private box—the box that is made of elm, and covered with cloth, and studded with nails, and screwed down? Is there any "paper" going about beyond Overend and Gurney's, and the debentures of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway? Are there any little boys who yet take their sisters to the play, and tremble before boxkeepers, or who, when they are in funds, pay two shillings to see *Ruy Blas* or the *Dead Heart*? I doubt not but there are. "The earth is rich in man and maid," and ever will be, I hope. The old haunts, the old cheap pleasures, exist; but it is we who have fallen away from them, not they that have fallen away from us.

I may say, conscientiously, at this present writing, that I detest theatrical entertainments; that I am never taken to the play but by fierce entreaty, not unmingled with force; that I never sit down in the stalls without reluctance; nor endure the performance without agony; nor leave the horrible mephitic gas-choked oven of a place, without delight. I do not know my way through any stage-doors now; a new generation of stage doorkeepers has arisen who know me not. I have not been to a rehearsal, or into a green room, for years, and, save when I am compelled by that same entreaty mingled with force, I never ask any theatrical authorities for orders. Quite divorced from the smell of the lamps, and the sawdust, and the

orange-peel, and the sound of the prompter's whistle, and the slamming of the box doors, and the rustling of ladies' robes as they pass to their seats, all once so pleasant to hear, I still enjoy, to a certain extent, the privilege of going to the play for nothing. Of one private box I am not only renter, but freeholder. I disdain the favours of the free list. My box belongs to me in fee simple. I furnish it, as I list, with the softest settees and carpets, the brightest mirrors, the coziest arm-rests and screens. I may smoke in my box. I may drink tea there. No boxkeeper dares to worry me for gratuities. I carry my box about with me as Glamdditch carried Grildrig. I set it down, and open it, whensoever I list. Now in Europe, now in Africa, now in America. The settlement of the bill of the play depends entirely on my own will and caprice. I may change the performance every night; I may shut up the house for a whole season. I may command Mosé in Egitto to follow the Miller and his Men, and interpolate the ballet of Giselle between the fourth and fifth acts of Macbeth. I am free to patronise native talent, or to choose my plays and my performers exclusively from foreign sources. I can bestow the most sumptuous scenery, dresses, and decorations on my repertory. Without a farthing of extra expense I will get up a Christmas pantomime or an Easter burlesque. My corps de ballet is ten thousand strong. My "supers" are innumerable. I am not only freeholder of the proscenium box, but stage manager, prompter, and leader of the orchestra. I must own that I am likewise called upon to dress the leading lady, shift the scenes, and snuff the candles. Finally, I am not compelled, when I go to the play for nothing, to assume that most abhorrent of disfigurements, evening dress; on the contrary, when I have a mind to enter my private box, I usually divest myself of all superfluous attire, lie down with my head on a pillow, and on the softest bed attainable, and then ring for the fiddlers to strike up, and for the play to begin. Let me conclude by observing that two of the chief advantages of my theatre personal, are, that I can see the play with my eyes shut, and that my actors and actresses never come to the treasury on Saturday. Ring up! What shall the play be to-night? I have a lurking liking for fantastic titles to my dramas. A "Bunch of Quays"? Presto: I have a private box in an inn at Rotterdam. To every stage there must be a proscenium. The frame to my Dutch mirror, is a first-floor window looking out on the great quay of the Boompps.

The scenery is very well painted; but the perspective is, perhaps, a little too flat; the light is too evenly diffused to afford any picturesque contrasts of *chiar'oscuro*; and there are, certainly, in the middle distance too many squabby windmills for romantic effect. But you must take your Dutch decorations as you find them. They are all by Vandýke, and not exempt from a slight tinge of mannerism. There are plenty of

ships, however, and their infinitely interlaced spars and rigging are very graceful and grateful to the eye. Yonder row of lime-trees, too, on the Boompps are cool and refreshing. Beyond these I do not see much to chronicle in the way of mise en scène, except rain. Bless us, how it has rained for four-and-twenty hours! It never rains but it pours, says the proverb; but it has rained, without pouring, since yesterday morning at Rotterdam. A fine impartial even-spreading rapid sleet; a rain that seems to come up as well as down; a cold vapour-bath; a rain that does not interfere with business, for it wets you and your umbrella through before you are aware of it, and being thoroughly damped for the day, you make up your mind to the worst, till you can go home to dinner, and dry yourself. There is no mud. Dutch cleanliness takes care of that. The stones of my quay cannot be wetter, but they cannot be cleaner. As the rain falls, alert men with birch brooms step forward and sweep it away, ere any particle of earthy matter can enter into solution with the moisture. Such an alert broomster has been at work since early this morning, and I doubt not that he only relieved a guard of other besomists. To paint the lily, or to gild refined gold, has hitherto been deemed a work of supererogation; but what of washing wet flagstones? This, however, is done at Rotterdam. When the man with the broom finds that the rain is getting the better of him, and that, his strenuous sweeping notwithstanding, it is slowly forming into puddles in the interstices, he picks his way back to the hotel, and speedily reappears with a pail of water, the contents of which he carefully slashes over the soaking stones. In most continental cities that I have seen, the lazy people wait for the rain to come and wash their streets; and, as it ordinarily comes but once a year in hot climates, the streets are only washed during one month out of the twelve. The Dutch regard the rain as a kind of contaminator, and, with full buckets, hasten to wash it away. A very cleanly people are these Hollanders. They would reach perfection, could they only be persuaded to wash themselves.

Now, on a November morning, to look out on a wet quay, bordered by wet trees, with wet windmills in the middle distance, a wetter sea in the background, and the wettest sky overhead, distilling a persistent moisture, is not very conducive to that state of mental exhilaration which is termed, inelegantly but forcibly, "jolly." Men staying in lonely inns have done desperate things on wet days. Washington Irving's stout gentleman was driven, under the persecution of Aquarius, to salute the chambermaid with a kiss. Ay, and he kissed the landlady to boot. It is my own fault, perhaps, if the first drama I have chosen to witness from my private box is a "water piece." Till the curtain descends, however, I must fain see the play that I have summoned up; and for the nonce I am at Rotterdam, and on the Boompps, and I cannot help myself. Rain, as a rule, makes one wretched. A Frenchman, who translates the

"ennui" from which he really suffers tortures into that fabulous British malady, "le spleen," would very soon ring for a brazier of charcoal and a box of matches, hermetically close all the doors and windows—the which is difficult in this damp and windy country—and, without further ado asphyxiate himself. The view of the wet Boompps fails, somehow, to engulf me in despondency. I like the man with the birch broom, and I wonder how many stuyvers he gets a day for washing the rain away. I fancy him a kind of Low Country Ixion, condemned to this labour for punitive reasons. I have read old stories of vagrants in the Dutch Rasp-houses sentenced to hard labour in a room where there was a pump, and into which water was continually flowing. If they did not pump it out, they were drowned. I like the little Dutch boys who come splashing along, with their bright violet stockings and their clumping wooden shoes. I admire the fussy Dutch damsels who pass in their multiplied yet abbreviated linsey-woolsey skirts, and the thin plates of gold over their banded hair, and neatly twilled caps, and demure gorgets, and massy earrings. Surely these Dutch damsels can never want sweethearts, for I calculate that, on a reasonable average, every young woman has at least seven pounds tenworth of good substantial finery about her. I like the Dutch young woman; though the censorious may urge that her gait more intimately resembles a waddle than a walk.

A traveller, even the most splenetic, has no right to suffer from the spleen when he can see ships. Now, on the Boompps this wet morning, there are any number of ships. I will dismiss the great flat-bottomed barges, heaped high from stem to stern with cabbages, with onions, or with the cannon-balls of peace—Dutch cheeses. I will eliminate from my picture, the lumbering *tuytschuyts*—omnibuses of the water, which look like the lord mayor's barge grown out of all shape, or the Bucentaur become drop-sical. Of schooners and brigantines, sails and ferry-boats, clinging to the Boompps like burrs to the hand which is drawn through a hedge, I will say nothing. But I cannot spare you that great, deep-hulled, swelling-sided three-master, the Waterstaat East Indian, which is even now loading for Batavia, and is to set sail to-morrow morning, they tell me, for her spicy destination.

I love a ship. My heart leaps up, quite as high as Mr. Wordsworth's when he beheld the rainbow in the sky, when I think that yonder great black mass pitched all over—the ark which contains Shem, Ham, Japhet, and their wives and families, and casks of beef and pork, and preserved peas, and Bass's pale ale, and a hold full of Manchester cotton goods, prisoned by hydraulic pressure with shining iron bands, and pigs, and sheep, and poultry, and all manner of creeping things—shall, with no stronger assistance than that afforded by a few poles and some tarred strings and some wet towels, but with a trusty man at the helm, and a master mariner who knows his Hamilton Moore

by heart, be wafted over the world—be spirited from these dull misty Boompps to the huge hot Javan region—to the land of infinite spices and continual coffee groves, and where the very air is sticky with sugar. How inadequate seems even the biggest ship to contain a tithe even of the things which you know to be stowed away in her! Row round her, pace her deck from stem to stern, view her near or from afar off, and still you can with difficulty persuade yourself that so much cargo, and so many stores, and so many living souls—to say nothing of the cow amidships, and the fowls in the poultry-coop—can be in reality packed within her sides. It is all very well, when she is a steamer, to be told that she gets lighter every day, owing to the quantity of coals she has burnt; but how did she get all those coals into her bunkers, to begin with? It is all very well to explain to me the theory of winds and tides, and the mathematical laws of navigation; but her sails and her masts, her captain and her crew, her charts and her compasses and her quadrants notwithstanding, she is not the less to me a mystery of mysteries. However she does get, anyhow, to her destination I know no more than did the wisest man that ever lived. King Solomon was fain to confess that, next to the way of a fowl in the air and a serpent on a rod, the way of a ship on the sea puzzled him most crucially.

Now, this enormous Waterstaat East Indian. She looks as firmly planted at her moorings as the Stadt House at Amsterdam on her piles: yet to-morrow morning, when I take a survey of the Boompps from my windows, I shall find the Waterstaat clean gone—gone, like the puff of smoke belched forth by a cannon in a holiday salute. And she will reach the shores of Java somehow, this unwieldy monster, and, all unwieldy as she is, the waves will make sport of her, and dandle her like an infant, or send her spinning like a top, or see-saw, like Margery Daw, and turn her all but upside down. For my part I decline, in the present mood of my mind, to believe in the winds and tides, and Hamilton Moore's Navigation. I prefer to believe in Neptune with an attendant bevy of Tritons—hairy persons of a salt savour, blowing lustily into enormous conch-shells. I prefer to believe in *Æolus*—have I not heard him playing upon a harp, purchased at Cramer's, set outside my chamber window? I prefer to believe that Boreas is indeed a blustering railer. I prefer to believe in the corporeal existence of those sirens of the sea against whom the heathen man whom Homer sang of, stopped his ears. I see the sirens. They belong to the corps de ballet. They have long back hair, which they let down over their white shoulders. Goodness gracious me! What a change has come over the stage of my theatre! The Waterstaat East Indian, the Boompps, the muddy river, all fade away. I behold an ocean of painted canvas, and behind some blue gauze waves are a bevy of sirens, with their long back hair floating over their white shoulders; and there, as I

live, is pretty and fresh Miss Julia Smith with a branch of "property coral" in her hand, singing "Over the dark blue waters, over the wide, wide sea." How many years have gone down under the dark blue waters, and put out to the wide, wide sea, since I went to the play for nothing, and saw Oberon at the St. James's Theatre in London!

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE TWO GREAT MURDERS IN RATCLIFF-HIGHWAY (1811).

THERE are many events of the past and present century—murders, wrecks, riots, trials, famines, insurrections—familiar by name, but the details of which are unknown to the younger men of this generation. Every one has heard something of the Luddites and their outrages; of Thurtell the gambler, and the cruel murder he committed; of that agonising event the burning of the Kent East Indiaman; of the savage execution of the Cato-street conspirators; of the trickeries of old Patch; of the tragedy of Spaffelds; but there are few who have had either time or opportunity to collect, compare, and read at full length, the newspapers, pamphlets, and street ballads which refer to them. It is only those who have, who can know thoroughly the truth or falsehood of traditional accounts. It is only by reading interesting or vivifying details, that the real nature of the social catastrophes and remarkable occurrences of the past century can be ascertained. Some of these pages of old Time's chronicle we would present for reperusal.

Before gas-lights and the new police had rendered London as safe as it is at present, the east end of the metropolis was infested by the dregs of the ruffianism, not merely of Europe, but of all the world. Outlaws of all countries sought refuge among the crews of our Indiamen, to obtain sanctuary from pursuers, or to earn money enough for a revel on shore. Thievish Hindoos, cruel Malays, manslaughtering Americans, savage Frenchmen, brutal Germans, fiery Slavonians, butcherly Russians, the leers and outcast of both Christendom and savagedom, frequented the brandy-shops and low dancing-rooms of Wapping, Stepney, Poplar, Ratcliff-highway, and the purlieus of the Docks. With this seething mass of villany, it could scarcely be wondered at that a great crime should be at last committed.

Within a few minutes of midnight, on Saturday, December 7, 1811, Mr. Marr, a young newly married man, keeping a small lace and hosier's shop at No. 29, Ratcliff-highway, sent out his servant girl to pay a baker's bill and to get some oysters for supper. Mrs. Marr was at the time in the kitchen, rocking her baby in its cradle. The apprentice, a young ruddy Devonshire lad, named Goven, aged fourteen, was either busy in the shop or at work down-stairs. The girl was alarmed as she left the house on that peculiarly gloomy December night, by seeing

a man in a long dark coat standing in the lamp-light on the opposite side of the street, as if watching her master's house. The watchman, a friend of Marr's, had also previously noticed this mysterious man continually peeping into the window of Marr's shop, and, thinking the act suspicious, had gone in and told the proprietor. A few minutes after Mary the servant left, as the watchman was returning on his ordinary half-hourly beat, Marr called to him to help him put up the shutters, and the watchman then told Marr that the man who had been skulking about had got scared, and had not been in the street since. In the mean time, the girl, looking in vain for an oyster-shop still open, had wandered from street to street and lost her way. It was nearly half an hour before she got home; when she arrived there, to her surprise she found no lights visible, and no sound within the house. She rang, and then gently knocked, but there was no reply. She rang again, after a pause, but violently. Presently (but we take this fact, with some slight doubt, from Mr. De Quincey's wonderful narrative of the tragedy) she heard a noise on the stairs, and then footsteps coming down the narrow passage that led to the street door. Next, she heard some one breathing hard at the keyhole. With a sudden impulse of almost maniacal despair, she tore at the bell and hammered at the knocker: partly, perhaps, unconscious of what she did, partly to rouse the neighbourhood and paralyse the murderer, feeling now certain that a murder had been committed. Mr. Parker, a pawnbroker next door, threw up his bedroom window, and the servant told him that she felt sure her master and mistress had been murdered, and that the murderer was even then in the house. Mr. Parker half dressed himself, and, armed with a kitchen poker, vaulted over the low brick wall of his back yard, and entered Mr. Marr's premises. A light was still glimmering through the half-open back door, by which the murderer must have just escaped. The shop was floating with blood. Marr lay dead behind the counter, near the window, his skull shattered by blows of a mallet, and his throat cut. The bodies of Mrs. Marr and the apprentice, also killed in the same way, were lying in the centre of the shop floor. The wife had apparently been murdered as she came up-stairs, alarmed by the scuffle; the apprentice boy after some resistance, for the whole counter and even ceiling was sprinkled with his blood. Some one in the crowd suggested a search for the child. It was found in the kitchen, crushed and with its throat cut, the cradle beaten to pieces, and the bed-clothes piled over it. At this horrible aggravation of a hideous series of crimes, the mob gave a scream of horror. The servant girl became speechless and delirious, and was carried away by the neighbours.

The murderer must have worked with terrible swiftness and sagacity. The watchman remembered that, a little after twelve, finding some of Marr's shutters not quite secure, he called to him, and some one answered, "We know it."

That must have been the murderer. Not more than two guineas had been stolen from the house. An iron-headed mallet, such as ships' carpenters use, and with the initials J. P. on the handle, was left behind by the murderer. It was quite clear that the wretch must have stolen in, the moment the shutters were up and while the door was closing. He had glided in, first stealthily locking the door, and then asked to look at some unbleached cotton stockings. As Marr had turned to take these from a pigeon-hole behind the counter, the first blow must have been struck, for the stockings were found clenched in poor Marr's hands. The murder of the child seemed alone to prove that revenge had been the motive.

Next week many persons were arrested about Shadwell on suspicion of the murders, but they were all exonerated and discharged. A sailor, half crazed with drink, accused himself of the murders, but his insanity was soon discovered.

On the Sunday week, the Marrs were buried; thirty thousand labouring and seafaring people watching the funeral with faces of "horror and grief." All London was stricken with fear; fire-arms and thousands of rattles were purchased. There was a horrible alarm that the unknown monster, having failed to secure plunder the first time, would attempt further crimes; the bravest man dreaded the approach of night.

That dread was too well founded. On Thursday, the 19th of the same month—only twelve nights after the Marr murder, and near the same place—another butchery took place. It occurred at the King's Arms public-house, at the corner of New Gravel-lane: a small street running at right angles to Rateliff-highway. Mr. Williamson, a man of seventy, and his wife, kept the house; the other inmates were a middle-aged Irishwoman who cleaned the pots and waited in the taproom, a little granddaughter about fourteen years old, and a young journeyman, aged about twenty-six, lodger. Mr. Williamson was a respectable man, always in the habit of turning out his guests at eleven o'clock, and finally shutting up at twelve, when the last neighbour had sent for his ale.

Nothing particular happened in the house while it was open that night, except that some timid persons noticed a pale red-haired man, with ferocious eyes, who kept in dark corners, went in and out several times, and had been met wandering in the passages, much to the landlord's annoyance.

When the guests had left, and the lodger had gone to bed in the second floor (the child being asleep on the first), Mr. Williamson was drawing beer on the ground floor, Mrs. Williamson was moving to and fro between the back kitchen and the parlour. The servant was cleaning the grate and placing wood for the morning.

The lodger nervous in bed, and only able to doze, woke at half-past eleven, thinking of Mr. Williamson's wealth, the murder of the Marrs, and his landlord's carelessness about leaving his

door open so late in a dangerous and ruffianly neighbourhood. Suddenly he heard the street door below slammed and locked with tremendous violence. He leapt out of bed, and lowering his head over the balustrade, heard the servant scream from the back parlour, "Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be all murdered!" He felt at once it was the murderer of the Marrs. Half crazed with terror, and unconscious of what he did, Turner crept down-stairs and looked through the glass window of the taproom (Mr. De Quincey says through the door that was ajar). He could not see the murderer at first, but heard him behind the door, rapidly trying the lock of a cupboard or escritoire. Presently there appeared a tall well-made man, dressed in a rough drab bearskin coat, who knelt over the body of the landlady and rifled her pockets. He pulled out various bunches of keys, one of which fell with a clash on the floor. The listening man noticed that the murderer's shoes creaked as he walked, and that his coat was lined with the finest silk. With the keys now stolen, the murderer retired again to the middle section of the parlour. Even in his fear Turner felt that there was now a moment or two left for escape. The sighs of the dying women, the clash of the keys, and the jingling of the money, would prevent his footsteps on the creaky stairs from being heard. Softly and with his bare feet he ran up-stairs to escape by the roof, but in his terror he could not find the trap-door. He then ran to his room, forced the bed to the door as gently as he could, and tied the sheets together to drop from the window, which was twenty-two feet to the ground. This rope he fastened to an iron spike he luckily found in the tester of the bed. In a few minutes he had let himself down, and was caught by a watchman who was passing at the time. His first thought had been to save the child, but he was afraid she might cry if he awoke her suddenly, and then both the child and he would have been murdered. Almost speechless, all Turner could do, on reaching the ground, was to point to the door of Williamson's house, and stammer, "Marr's murderer is there." It was not twelve o'clock yet, and several persons soon assembled: two of the most resolute, men named Ludgate and Hawse, armed themselves with iron crows, and broke open the door. They found the bodies of Mrs. Williamson, and the servant Bridget Harrington, with the throats cut, near the fireplace in the parlour. In the cellar they discovered the body of the landlord, which had been thrown down-stairs. He had defended himself with an iron bar wrenched from the cellar window; his hands were cut and hacked, his leg was broken, and his throat was cut. The little grandchild was discovered tranquilly asleep. A rush was then made behind, where a noise was heard of somebody forcing windows; and as the door was forced, a man leaped out, crashing down the glass and window-frame. There was behind the house a large piece of waste ground with a clay

embankment, belonging to the London Dock Company, and across this the man escaped through the rising mist.

The agitation of the neighbourhood at the news was irresistible frenzy. People leaped down from windows; every house poured forth its inmates. Sick men rose from their beds. One man, who died, indeed, the next week, snatched up a sword and went into the street. The one desire was to tear and hew the wolfish demon to pieces in the very shambles where he had been found. The drums of the volunteers beat to arms; the fire-bells rang. Every cart and carriage was stopped, every boat on the river and every house in the neighbourhood was searched, but in vain. Rewards of fifteen hundred pounds were offered by government and the parish of St. George.

The very next day an Irish sailor, named John Williams, *alias* Murphy, was apprehended at the Pear-Tree public-house, kept by Mrs. Vermillot, where he lodged. About half-past one on the night of the first murder, he had come up into the loft, where there were five or six beds, two Scotchmen and several Germans. The watchman was crying the half hour at the time. The Germans were sitting up in bed with a lighted candle reading; but they put it out because Williams said, roughly, "For God's sake put out that light, or something will happen!" In the morning a fellow-lodger, named Harris, told him of the murder before he got up. He replied surlily, "I know it." Since then he had been restless at nights, and had been heard to say in his sleep: "Five shillings in my pocket?—my pockets are full of silver." Alarmed, at the Marrs', the murderer had taken nothing there, although there was a sum of one hundred and fifty-two pounds in the house, besides several guineas in Marr's pocket. The mallet left, with another maul and an iron ripping chisel, at Marr's, was identified as belonging to Peterson, a Norwegian ship carpenter, who had left it in a tool-chest in Mrs. Vermillot's garret at the Pear-Tree, from which it was now missing. Mrs. Vermillot's children remembered the mallet from having often played with it. The prisoner's washerwoman also proved that a shirt which he had recently worn came to her bloody and torn, and he had told her he had had a fight. It was proved that he knew Marr and Williams, and several publicans certified that they had resolved to refuse him their houses because he was always meddling with their tills. It was also proved that he had recently cut off his whiskers, and that muddy stockings he had worn had been found hidden behind a chest.

This was on the Friday; on the Saturday he was committed for trial. On his way to prison, but for a powerful escort he would have been torn in pieces by a fierce mob. At five o'clock he was left in his cell at Coldbath-fields, and his candle removed. In the morning he was found dead, hanging by his braces to an iron bar.

A few weeks later, the guilt of this horrible wretch was finally and completely proved. In

a closet at the Pear-Tree public-house, some men, searching behind a heap of dirty clothes, found plugged into a mouse-hole a large ivory-handled French clasp-knife, the handle and blade both smeared with blood. Williams had been seen using the knife about three weeks before the Williamsons' murder. They also found a blue jacket of Williams's, the outside pocket of which was stiff with coagulated blood: as if the murderer had thrust the money into this pocket with his hand still wet.

A lady who saw Williams at the police-court examination, described him to De Quincey as a middle-sized man, rather thin and muscular, and with reddish hair: his features mean and ghastly pale. It did not seem real blood that circulated in his veins; but a green sap welling from no human heart. He was known for an almost refined and a smooth insinuating manner; he is even said to have once asked a girl he knew, if she would be frightened if she saw him appear about midnight at her bedside armed with a knife? To which the girl replied:

"Oh, Mr. Williams, if it was anybody else I should be frightened, but as soon as I heard your voice I should be tranquil."

The interment of this wretch was ghastly enough. A quaint grim print of the procession still exists. On Monday, December 30th, the body was taken in procession from Cold Bath-fields to the watch-house near Ratcliff-highway. The corpse lay on a high platform, in a very high cart drawn by one horse. The platform was composed of rough deal battened together, and was raised at the head so as to slope the body, while a partition at the other end, towards the horse, kept the feet from slipping. The body was dressed in a clean white frilled shirt open at the neck, the hair was neatly combed, and the face washed. The countenance was ruddy, the bare arms and wrists were a deep purple; the lower part of the body was covered with clean blue trousers and brown stockings (no shoes), and at the head was the stake that was to be driven through the suicide. On the right leg was fastened the iron which Williams had on when he was committed to prison. The fatal mallet was placed upright at the left side of his head, and the ripping chisel on the other side.

About six o'clock the procession of three hundred constables and headboroughs, most of them armed with drawn cutlasses, moved slowly towards Marr's house, where the cart stopped a quarter of an hour. The jolting having turned the murderer's head away from the house, a man clambered on to the platform and placed it directly facing the spot. The procession then moved on, down Old Gravel-lane and Wapping High-street, and, entering New Gravel-lane by Wapping-wall, reached the second house, where the constables again halted the cart. Then, entering Ratcliff-highway, they turned up Cannon-street, and near the turnpike, where the New-road crosses, they reached the grave—which was dug purposely small and shallow. After a deep and solemn silence for about ten minutes, the body was jolted into its infamous hole, amid the yells and cheers of thousands. The

stake was driven through the body with the murderer's mallet, quick-lime was thrown upon the carcase, and the grave was filled in.

It is useless to discuss the motives of Williams's crimes. Mr. De Quincey hints that Marr and Williams had sailed to Calcutta in the same Indianman, and that on their return they had both courted the young woman whom Marr afterwards married. The second murder may have been the result of a wish for money with which to find means for escape: a thirst for money and an unquenchable lust for blood, are apparent in both. This good, at least, arose from the horrible tragedies: they showed to the excited and terrified city the utter incompetence of the old watchmen, and prepared men's minds for the necessity of a larger, younger, and more disciplined, body of police.

There were many reasons for these murders arousing such intense public attention. The papers of the year previous to the Marr and Williamson murders, record many undiscovered crimes. These had already excited an amount of fear which Williams's crimes heightened to an universal paroxysm. Every sailor or dock-labourer found stabbed or drowned, was supposed to be another victim of the mysterious gang, that no one doubted haunted the east end of London. Until Williams hung himself in his cell, and until the clay-stained trousers and the gory knife and jacket were found, the panic continued and made night a hideous time. But, then, the great storm of fear subsided slowly into a ground-swell of sluggish distrust and apprehension. The military patrols were soon denounced as dangerous to the liberties of the country, and discontinued; and the constables resumed their inefficient and sleepy pottering about the broader streets and the neighbourhoods of favourite public-houses.

Gas, introduced into London on August 16, 1807, began, towards 1814, to get more general in the larger streets; the clearer and fuller light gave confidence to lonely pedestrians, and scared the prowling thief and the lurking assassin. Improvements moved slowly in the Tory country. It was not till 1829 that Sir Robert (then Mr.) Peel remodelled the police, and gave us for our greater security the present force.

Mr. De Quincey, in his picturesque but rather erroneous version of the double tragedy, has drawn attention in a most thrilling way to its chief points of pathos and intensity. He has likewise passed over in silence some points of the highest interest, and in his dates has even given the wrong year. Let us notice a few of his errors. He makes Marr's servant girl absent an hour. She was really absent only thirty minutes, seeking in vain an oyster-shop still open, and during those thirty minutes she returned once, looked in at the window, and saw her master, already doomed, still busy behind the counter. Mr. De Quincey says there was no noise heard by the neighbours during the murder; it is in evidence that a neighbour did hear a chair being drawn about the floor, and also heard the apprentice call out as if he were being struck or scolded. Mr. De Quincey

dwells with a tragic power that places him high among prose poets, on the awful moments between life and death, when the journeyman, Turner, stood watching through a glass door the murderer plying his work; but he forgot the still more dreadful crisis when the man, flying from red-handed death, and crazed with fear, sought in vain for the trap-door in the roof, well known to him. Mr. De Quincey elsewhere colours too highly. The poor frightened man had no time nor presence of mind to tear his sheets and blankets into strips, or plait and splice them. No; he did as any one else would have done. He sought no elaborate iron support; he tied the sheets together and dropped from the window. The lull of the mob when the head constable gave orders for silence, in order that the murderer's whereabouts might be detected, is also a finely conceived fiction. While a butcher with his axe and a smith with a crowbar were forcing open the cellar-flap, and some neighbours were also throwing the front door off its hinges, the murderer was actually heard dashing through a lower back window, and escaping up a clayey embankment, where his footprints were found. Hence, next day, any men seen in Wapping with clay-soiled trousers, were arrested.

But, from the first, Judgment was close upon the murderer. He was known to be acquainted with the Marr and Williamson families; he had been observed hanging about tills, and suspiciously haunting taprooms and public-house passages; he was seen washing suspiciously dirty stockings and trousers, which he then concealed; he cut off his whiskers for no apparent reason; besides other clues of evidence already mentioned. To crown all, Williams was so notorious an infamous man, for all his oily and snaky duplicity, that the captain of his vessel, the Roxburgh Castle, had always predicted that whenever he went on shore he would mount the gibbet.

OLD SCENES AND SCENERY.

THE word "scene," even when confined to theatrical uses, has very different significations. We say that Mr. W. Beverley has painted a very fine scene for the pantomime, and then we mean the picture with which the stage is decorated, and which represents the spot on which the action is supposed to take place. In like manner, if we say that this or that occurred in the first scene of a piece, while that or this occurred in the second, we mean that the first event was backed by a certain picture, for which another was substituted before the occurrence of the second. On the other hand, if we say that there is a fine scene between the Moor and Iago in the third act of Othello, we are not thinking of the picture at all, but of the situation in which the two characters are placed. It is in a sense analogous to this second use of the word "scene" that the comfortable man, who will submit to anything rather than endure a stormy quarrel with his better-half, declares that "he hates scenes."

If we now turn to some of the old English plays that are supposed to have been originally

performed without painted scenery of any kind, we find the word "scene" used in a third sense, as an indication of the entrances and exits of the characters. For this arrangement the words "enter" and "exit" are now used, but every first appearance or disappearance is considered a change of scene. Suppose, for instance, we have the following heads to the dialogue: "Scene I., Brown, Jones; Scene II., Jones; Scene III., Jones, Robinson." By these heads we simply mean that Brown and Jones are first seen together; that Brown presently goes off, and leaves Jones to soliloquise, and that afterwards Jones is joined by Robinson. "Scene" is, in fact, a mere equivalent for "combination."

This third use of the word is perfectly familiar to classical scholars, as it is the one adopted in all current editions of the Latin comedies, and also to the readers of French plays, in which "scène" is never used in another sense. The picture is by the French called a "décoration," and if—which is not very often the case—it is changed in the course of an act, in presence of the audience, we are informed by the book that a "change of decoration" takes place. Generally, a change in presence of an audience is avoided by a subdivision of acts into so-called "tableaux." But, however detailed the stage directions, the appearance or disappearance of a personage is always held to constitute a change of "scene," as in the Latin plays, where there are no stage directions whatever.

It seems that the old English dramatists, who wrote before the general introduction of painted scenery, were not altogether at their ease in the use of the word scene. Ben Jonson, indeed, as the especially classical man, followed the third or Latin sense; yet in at least one edition of his *Fall of Sejanus*, though the Latin mode of division is adopted, the word "scene" does not occur at all. In some old plays the heading, "Act I., Scene I.," is placed at the beginning merely, it would seem, because that was deemed the proper sort of thing to do; for people come in and go out, and changes of place occur, which would now require so many changes of picture, and yet we never come to Scene II. The word "scene" here has no more significance than a printer's ornament.

The plan adopted in the modern editions of Shakespeare and others, of dividing plays according to the present English fashion, using the word "scene" to denote a change of place, and indicating the place by a stage direction, does not belong to the Elizabethan days, but is the work of modern editors. The divisions are, indeed, mere conjectures as to places of action which the author intended to arise before the imagination of his audience; though they now serve as practical directions to the stage-manager.

Strange as it may appear, the modern English usage, according to which "scene" means the painted picture on the stage, though contrary to the plan generally deemed classical, seems most to accord with the habit of the Greeks. The works of the great Athenian tragedians have come down to us without any divisions into scenes, or any indication of entrance

or exit;* and the student, if he is numerically inclined, may, by watching the introduction of the chorus, at different intervals, make out his figure for himself, checking his result by the protest against plays containing more or less than five acts by the precept in Horace's *Art of Poetry*, which was doubtless based on Greek authority.

Neve minor neu sit quinto productior actu Fabula.

Not to the tragedies, but to the records of the structure of the old Greek stage, must we look for the word "scene," applied in a technical sense. According to these the *σκηνή*, which is exactly our "scene" written in Greek letters, was a wall which closed the stage at the back, and represented the place, commonly the front of a royal palace, in which the action was going on. How this "scene" was changed we do not exactly know, but that it was changed sometimes is certain; though the Frenchmen under Louis the Fourteenth fancied themselves so extremely Greek when they made the whole action of a tragedy take place on the same imaginary spot. The change, however, is nothing to our purpose here. We have enough to show that the Greek used the word "scene" in a technical sense, which would have been perfectly intelligible to any stage-carpenter from the corner of Pall Mall to the New-cut. Sometimes, we read, it denoted the stage itself on which the actors stood; but this use was evidently less technical, for the stage we properly called the *προσκήνιον*, or proscenium, a word which we now apply to the external framework of the stage, but which the Greeks understood to signify the portion of the theatrical edifice immediately in front of the wall (probably movable), on which was depicted the place of action. In another non-technical sense, the word *σκηνή* seems to have meant the portion of the dialogue spoken by the principal actors, as distinguished from the chorus; and here we have, perhaps, a clue to the Latin usage. I may remark that the Greek scenes, technically so called, were some times not pictorial, but architectural. Shall we venture to say that, in this case, they were very heavy "sets"?

Though we find that the present use of the word "scene" in English exactly corresponds to the Greek original, it is, as I have shown, equally clear that, in the Elizabethan days, the word, when marking the division of a play, was either used in the Latin sense, or meant nothing at all. Scenes in the present sense, it is now supposed, were first introduced upon a public stage by Sir William Davenant, shortly after the Restoration. Before the time of the Commonwealth they were confined, it is said, to the masques privately performed before the court and at the residences of the great nobility. That they were common enough in these exhibitions, even during the reign of Elizabeth, is a

* If I remember right, Beck, an old-fashioned and now disregarded editor of Euripides, adopts the Latin mode of division; but, if so, this is a mere exceptional case, and merely shows the editor's view.

fact not to be doubted. Mr. J. P. Collier, referring to the official account of the expense of the revels in 1568, finds items to the effect that "Strato's house," "Dobbin's house," and "Orestes' house," were provided and *painted*, together with a view of Rome, of Scotland, and of the Palace of Prosperity, which last was very likely something after the fashion of a modern "transformation scene." Similar items occur in accounts of a somewhat later date, and, in 1576, mention is made of a "painted cloth in two frames," which exactly corresponds to Malone's rigid definition of a scene as "a painting in perspective on a cloth, fastened to a wood frame or roller," which definition Mr. Collier rightly deems too strict, observing that the existence of the frame or roller is a secondary consideration, provided the scene is "a painting in perspective, and movable with the change of place mentioned in the play." Indeed, Mr. Collier himself is too rigid, when he insists on this condition of movability, which, after all, is contingent on a certain form of drama. Were not the further end of the dormitory of Westminster School wanted for non-theatrical purposes, the scene used for the performance of Latin Comedy at Christmas might as well be nailed to the wall as not, for it has remained unchanged for years, and has answered the purpose of illustrating five distinct plays.

However, while our courtly ancestors thought the thing called a "scene," they do not seem to have used the word "scene" in its present English sense till the reign of James the First. Mr. Payne Collier can find nothing earlier than the first edition of Dr. Halliday's comedy *Technogamia*, which was printed in 1610, and in which this stage direction occurs: "Here the upper part of the scene opened, when straight appeared Music and all the fine arts sitting on two semicircular benches, one above another, who sat thus till the rest of the prologue was spoken, which, being ended, they descended in order within the scene, while the music played." The expression "*within the scene*" clearly means in front of the scene, which was regarded as the back of an enclosure. A passage in one of Bacon's essays, published in 1612, and cited by Mr. Collier, is much to the point, as it contains a reference to movable pictures on the stage. "The alterations of scenes," says Bacon, "so it be quietly and without noise, are things of great beauty and pleasure." Still the word does not adhere very tightly to the thing. The Royal Slave, a play acted before the king and queen at Oxford, in 1636, is divided into acts and *scenes* in the Latin sense, but the painted scenes in the modern sense are called "appearances." Thus the first appearance is a "Temple of the Sun," another is a "stately palace," and so on.

According to the theory now accepted, these painted scenes, or "appearances," were, as I have already said, only employed for the private recreation of royalty and aristocracy. The patrons of the theatres open to the people were contented with a stage void of pictorial illustration, in which certain curtains, called "traverses," were made clumsily to indicate the

local position of the actors. There was a pair of curtains in front of the stage, answering the same purpose as the green baize at the present day; but which, instead of rising as with us, or sinking as with the ancients, when the performance was about to begin, was drawn off on each side by means of a rod. Besides this were the traverses, which could be drawn backward and forward at pleasure, so as to represent an inner and outer apartment, or the exterior and interior of a house. We can imagine an interior pair of curtains, hung on a rod placed over the middle of the stage, partially withdrawn so as to have an opening at any convenient point, and that by general consent the actors seen through this opening were supposed to be in a more interior position than those who stood in front. In addition to the traverses, there were contrivances to place the performers on different levels when this was required for the business of the play. Even in the absence of all historical evidence, we might be perfectly sure that, in their famous balcony scene, Romeo and Juliet did not both stand on the floor, but that the lady was raised some feet above the gentleman, if only by means of a table.

Taking a general survey of these contrivances, we find a stage that theatrically disposed children would, of their own accord, construct in a room, if they acted a play for their own amusement. A couple of clothes-horses would probably be employed for the same purpose as the old traverses, the space between them being supposed to represent, say, a door. A large arm-chair, with its back turned towards the audience, would stand for Juliet's balcony, or for those walls of Angiers whence the citizen in King John addresses the contending kings. Something of the sort is done in our modern theatres during the earlier rehearsals of a play. The scenery and properties not being ready, "substitutes" are employed; that is to say, any old box or table is made to answer the purpose of a splendid article of furniture, or portion of a set scene, where the proper position of the actor on the stage cannot be indicated without some tangible object. If we adopted the modern technical word, and said that, according to the received theory, plays were performed throughout with "substitutes," the expression would be strictly correct.

With the aid of a very little reflection we shall at once perceive that an arrangement, such as I have above described, must, if tolerated by the public, prove most beneficial to the growth of ideal dramatic poetry. No attempt is made at illusion beyond that which is produced by the excited imagination of the audience; the employed "properties" not being intended to afford any gratification, except so far as they render possible the action of the piece. The word "talky," now applied to pieces in which the dialogue seems somewhat too diffuse, would scarcely have a signification to a public assembled for no other end than to hear "talk" illustrated by appropriate gesticulation. The impatience of a modern audience on the subject of dialogue arises from

the desire to see some new picture on the stage, and a conviction that the coming treat is delayed by the verbosity of two or three performers. When no picture was expected, but talk was merely to be followed by other talk, this cause of impatience did not exist. The matter delivered in language, and the manner of its delivery, constituted the entire entertainment, and the only claimants for public favour were the poet and his actors. Let us observe, too, that this primitive state of things was quite as favourable to the growth of the actor's art as to that of dramatic poetry. The homely substitute was quite enough to mark the local position of the performers in every situation, and to enable these to go through all the external bodily movements necessary to express emotion and carry on the business of the story. Will such a state of the drama ever arise again? If it does, it will rather develop itself from the "readings" of the present day, than be restored to the ordinary theatre. A popular "reader" can command the attention of the multitude without the aid of even the humblest accessories; whereas to the modern notion of a theatre illusion, or an attempt at illusion, seems absolutely essential.

But if I am uncertain with regard to the future, I must confess that I am not altogether satisfied with regard to the past. I am not convinced that dramatic representation remained in this primitive state at every London theatre from the day when the earliest playhouse was first opened under the reign of Elizabeth, till two years before the death of Charles the First. In anything like detailed knowledge as to the manner in which those theatres were conducted we are lamentably deficient, and it is quite possible that a system was retained at one theatre after it had been abandoned by another. With all reverence for the accepted theory, I am greatly puzzled by a passage in the prologue to Richard Brome's *Count Beggen*, which was acted in 1632. The poet, speaking in his own person, says:

No gaudy scene

Shall give instruction what the plot doth mean; and while I acknowledge that I am indebted to Mr. J. P. Collier's *History of the English Stage* for my familiarity with the passage, I must also confess that to me it seems more important than it does to that distinguished antiquary. In the first place, it shows that the word "scene," as denoting a material object, and not the mere subdivision of an act, was familiar to a public who could scarcely have witnessed the court masques. In the second place, this scene threw light on the meaning of the plot. I may be answered by reference to a fact which I have not yet touched upon, that in the primitive state of the English drama a board or placard was set up, on which was indicated the place at which the action was supposed to occur. Thus, the word "Denmark" would greet the eyes of the audience during the performance of *Hamlet*. On the basis of this fact I shall be told that such a placard might have been affixed to a gaudy curtain, and that this

might have been denoted by Brome's prologue. But a gaudy curtain with a placard in the middle of it must have been, at best, but a humble spectacle, and Brome's boast, that he could get on without such expedient, must have sounded very oddly. The words seem exactly such as would be spoken by a poet who wished to state that his play would be found perfectly intelligible and satisfactory without the aid of gaudy scenic accessories. They likewise seem addressed to an audience to whom such accessories were familiar. That Brome thinks it is a merit not to use this gaudy scene is clear enough; but he might object to the gaudiness of the picture, not to its existence, and refer to a state of the stage in which the effect of accessories was beginning to eclipse that of poetry and histrionic art.

A MERE SCRATCH.

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

THE day was very young indeed when pretty Esther, bright and fresh as the morn herself, stole out of her little chamber, and, thanks to instructions received overnight, made her way out into the beautiful gardens for which Gosling Graize had long been renowned. She was to leave at eight, before which hour Sir George seldom quitted his room, and thus the young lady calculated that she might enjoy a ramble in the gardens, if not a short run in the woods, without attracting the notice of her host.

But she reckoned without that host.

She tripped gaily on, across the lawns, up one walk, down another, trying to lose her way in that, to her, enchanted labyrinth, and almost dancing in the buoyancy of spirit which a fair morning, lighting up lovely things, commonly brings to the young. For a moment she sat down on a rustic seat, now she peeped into an arbour, now lingered beside a crystal spring, and caught the liquid diamonds as they glittered forth. Passing up a path shaded with laurel and arbutus, she approached what appeared to be a garden more private than the rest. It was, however, guarded only by a light wire fence. The gate was open, and a flush of roses beyond proved too tempting. Esther glided in. It comprised about half an acre, and was filled with rose-trees. It was the famed rose-pleasure of Gosling Graize, pride and solace of many a defunct Dame Gosling, and fruitful source of heart-burning among all gardeners of the district whose hearts were in their office.

Rose time was past, but a few varieties were yet in bloom, and Esther, whose passion was a rose, examined them with delight. One, just attaining perfection, turned its glowing face towards her. She gathered it tenderly.

"When I die," she said, aloud, "may the last of God's beautiful works I see—except the dear human face—be one of *you*!"

"Who comes into the giant's garden at cock-crow to steal his favourite roses?" said a voice of assumed ferocity, as the speaker, looking as unlike Cormoran or Blunderbore as a handsome

youth might, issued from a trellised arbour artfully concealed in an angle of the pleasure.

Esther uttered a startled exclamation, and, in catching back her hand, scratched it somewhat smartly with a thorn.

"I am the unluckiest fellow in the world," exclaimed the giant, at once contracting into the ordinary dimensions, "in practical jokes! See, now, what I have done! My savage kinsman, Hurlo-Thrumbo the Three-headed, could do no more than shed your blood. Let me assist you, I beg."

The hand had to submit, and afforded George an opportunity of noticing what *we* have learned already:—that it was a pretty hand, but one that had not spared itself in the battle of life, and now accepted the thorn-scratch with the indifference of a veteran.

Esther thanked him, and murmured some excuse for her intrusion.

"My dear young lady, not a word," said the baronet. "It was by the merest chance—a fortunate one for me—that I rose so early, and wandered hither; a corner precious to my sister, but which I rarely visit. I observe," he continued, "that you called me by my name. Was that a guess?"

"Not quite. I saw you last night, for a moment, on the stairs."

"You knew me *then*?"

"I—I had been looking at your picture," said Esther, hastily. "But, indeed, I might more properly ask, how do *you* know *me*?" she added, laughing to cover her embarrassment.

"I—I had been questioning my butler," replied Sir George, with affected hesitation. "Come, Miss Vann, since the giant has a fancy for retaining you in his den (though without, I do assure you, any culinary purpose), let him do what he may to atone for the detention, by showing you the treasures of his garden."

Sir George looked at his companion. Esther was without a bonnet, and the burnished hair, in its smooth bands, was the sole protection to the little shapely head, well set upon a white and not too slender neck. Her countenance betrayed a rare mixture of firmness and sensibility. Her mouth and chin might have been cut in stone, so inexorable was their expression; while, on the other hand, her ready colour, moistening eye, and an occasional quick nervous movement in conversing, betrayed the excitability of a nature that must have attained the self-government Esther usually displayed.

She wore a dress of poor material, with, here and there, a neat though palpable darn, but adapting itself perfectly to her little, faultless figure, and set off with collar and wristbands like the driven snow.

It would seem that Sir George speedily forgot his promise concerning the flowers; oddly enough, Miss Vann appears to have forgotten it also. Certain it is that, without any pretence of visiting the choice parterres, the two strolled on, from walk to walk, in a state of perfect contentment. It would be difficult to say which had been the more surprised. Expecting in Esther a half-educated girl, whom a few polished remarks,

made in an easy, patronising way, would more than satisfy, perhaps instruct, the baronet found himself engaged with one whose information seemed fully equal to his own, in whose taste he could detect no flaw, and whose modes of expression, singularly terse and clear, were wholly free from those conventionalities which are frequently indicative of superficial education.

As for Esther, the more she listened to her companion's discourse, the more overpowering became her amazement that a nature so refined should have been prompted to seek such an association as that which impended! Good soul as she knew her aunt to be, Esther's taste and judgment had long since convinced her that the worthy woman was not above, if indeed she might not be considered a shade below, the station to which she belonged. Could there be some misconception? Or was it an idle jest? The latter theory did not seem to harmonise with Sir George's character and bearing. Was one or other of the parties *mad*? If so, *which*?

"Why did you look at me in that quick way?" asked George, abruptly, but with a smile.

"Did I?" said Esther, caught in the fact.

"Yes, more than once; and as I do not remember," continued George, "that my observations were, in either instance, of a startling character, hence my curiosity. You must have discovered by this time that I am a tame and civil-spoken monster, and can have no serious misgivings on that score. Come, Miss Vann, something prompted that quick movement. You hesitate? Then I proceed to guess. You have been debating in your mind whether there is not in my family a slight taint of—in insanity—"

Esther coloured.

"—and endeavouring," continued George, "to detect some evidence of it in my face?"

The blush deepened.

"An eloquent answer," said the young man, laughing. "Now tell me, Miss Vann, is it, or is it not, incumbent on us to observe a solemn pledge?"

"How can you ask?"

"At hazard of everything?"

"Yes, at—"

Esther made a sudden pause. A thought, suggested she hardly knew how—most probably by a remark she had heard overnight—flashed across her mind.

"He has had a love-quarrel with—with the lady she spoke of, at the Haie. This absurd proposal to my aunt was made in pique and passion. Wrong—foolish—cruel to all three!"

"You don't answer me," said George.

"Nor do *you* need the assurance of a nursery-governess," said Esther, rather spitefully, "that *every* promise should be kept, unless—unless—"

"What?"

"—cancelled by its wicked rashness."

"I should have said, a deliberate promise."

"There is a deliberation in passion itself," said Esther. "I spoke, of course, of that rash-

ness which wilfully blinds itself to former obligations, inconsistent with the new."

"But if the penalty of such doings attached only to oneself——"

"It would be simply what we deserve."

"Only, it rarely does," said George.

"Rarely," said Esther.

"That's the worst of it," said George.

"The worst," assented Esther.

They walked on in silence for a few moments, following their respective trains of thought.

Esther's: "Poor, rich, unhappy man! A whole life of regret, remorse, and mortification, for perhaps one moment's anger! Two happy, beautiful lives spoiled, a third not benefited, for what happiness could poor dear old aunt find in a position so false as *this*? What a fate for each! Can nothing be done? Nothing?" And the girl's heart swelled with genuine compassion as she glanced at the fortunate descendant of twenty-five generations walking at her side.

The musing of George: "She would have me pause. Now, *why*? From pity? What interest can she have in my individual self to outweigh the advantage, to her, of the connexion? Stay, now, is *this* possible? Can the old wo——" (George shuddered, as he checked the epithet in his mind)—"can she have reflected on the absurd anomaly of such an union, and, by way of experiment, cast this fair temptation in my way? In that case, my vow compels me to accept it. She is not a Mildred" (he sighed), "but, at all events, an Esther, fair, sweet, and, if I am not mistaken, singularly lovable. Not an atom of vulgarity, no false refinement, no pretence. Ah, if it be so. The good old creature!" thought George, glowing with gratitude for the supposed reprieve, "the faithful old cook! The sacrifice is noble. It invests her whole fraternity with a dignity of which one would not have conceived it susceptible. Now, the question is——"

"It is time for me to return, Sir George," said Esther, at this moment stopping short.

"Our progress shall end among those myrtles," said George, pointing onward.

"There will be little made of verbs and pronouns," returned Esther, laughing, "if I am not at home by school-time, ten o'clock." On her turning to go back, like one accustomed to have her own way, Sir George had to yield.

They had scarcely made a step or two, when Esther, seeming to take a sudden resolution, abruptly addressed him.

"Sir George, I wish to do you an essential service. I have heard that you have made an offer of marriage to my aunt. Do you forget that she is your cook?"

"I by no means forget that she *has* been. If—if she is my intended wife," said George, "the situations are incompatible."

"You reply so frankly, that I am encouraged to continue my catechism," said Esther, with the beaming smile with which she was wont to reward a promising pupil. "Do you think she will prove a better wife than cook?"

"Scarcely possible," said George, laughing.

"Do you consider her a fitting wife for yourself? How will your sister receive this news?"

"That alone is *my* especial affair," replied the young man, in a low voice.

"You are right, sir," said Esther. "I shall presently have done with my impertinent questioning. Will you answer three times more?"

"According to my usual indiscretion—yes," said George.

"Had you any thought, before yesterday, of making my aunt your wife?"

"None in the least," was the prompt reply.

"Was this condescending offer the only courtship you pursued yesterday?"

"No—I—yes—well, upon the whole, *no*," said the catechised.

"Last question—it will be long and somewhat circumstantial; but if I am wrong in the minutest particular, you are at liberty to put the whole aside unanswered. Were you not yesterday paying your addresses to a lady of your own condition, whom you believed not averse to them? Had you not some difference with her, ending in grief and anger—at least on *your* side? And was not your proposal to my aunt the offspring of that momentary passion?"

"That may be called a triangular query," replied George, smiling. "No matter. All is true. But the story is not fully told."

"Enough is told," said Esther. "Now, listen to the lecture that concludes my catechising. Whatever your motive, *self*, Sir George, was at its root. It was the act of a being naturally reasonable, but who, casting all moral guidance to the winds, wilfully commits himself to the current of wrath, not knowing—nor, for the moment, heeding—what wrong or peril it may entail. Because you have become indifferent to the vessel of your own happiness, are you entitled to run down the barks of others? Can this folly compensate for the slight, whatever it be, that you have suffered at your lady's hand? Is it intended for revenge? If she does not love you, there is none. If she does, will nothing less than a life-long penitence satisfy your resentment? What can she have done to merit that? Nay, what has my poor aunt herself done, that her thirteen years' faithful service should be so rewarded?"

"You speak, my dear young lady, as if it were a penalty."

"It *is*," replied his monitress. "To be dragged up from a station in which she was contented, useful, and respected, to one in which she can only be a mark for ridicule and envy."

"If your aunt partakes these sentiments," said the young baronet, with resignation, "far be it from me to press my claims. Does she?"

"I might reply, 'That alone is her especial affair,'" said Miss Vann. "It is quite possible that she may not yet have fully weighed the incongruities, the endless inconveniences and absurdities, of such an alliance. See, we are at the end of our walk. The last words you will ever hear from my lips shall be honest, if not agreeable. You have insulted—not honoured—your old servant by the preposterous offer you have made her. If she does not herself regard it in that light, that

is a greater reflection upon your openness than her judgment. I wish you good morning!"

"A moment," said George. "The last words I shall hear from your lips? Not so, I hope. Should the marriage take place, we shall be——"

"Strangers," said Esther, almost fiercely. "May this foot wither if ever it passes the threshold of these gates!"

The young man hesitated, and the colour rose to his brow.

"Had I had such a counsellor before, my course might have been wiser. Even now," he added, "since it is not wholly certain——" He stopped.

"Since what is not wholly certain?"

"That my offer has been accepted."

"Pardon me. As I have said, that is no affair of mine," said Esther, coldly.

"Pardon me," returned George. "It may be. Condescend to hear me for an instant," he continued, noticing her impatience. "You have lectured me with some severity, but not without justice. Though undeserving of such a lot, I would fain, were it possible, retain the privilege to be so lectured when my judgment is disposed to stray. Tell me, Miss Vann—Esther, if I may call you so—should your good aunt view this matter in the same sensible and dispassionate manner as yourself, would you, or in other words, might I—to speak, in short, explicitly, should she——"

"When we arrive at the dominant verb," said the young governess, unable to forbear a smile, "I shall be better able to reply."

"I am not accustomed to stammer at my lessons," replied Sir George. "The consciousness of having made one grievous mistake——"

"Sometimes betrays one into another," said Esther.

"Is it so? Have I, then, no hope?"

"Hope, sir!"

"Let me, for Heaven's sake, make myself understood. Esther, you who have penetrated the secret of my selfishness, and restored me, I hope, to better reason, will you—should your aunt's refusal leave me free—accept this hand? Worthy of more than I can offer——"

"Worthy of *more*!" interrupted Esther, turning her face upon him, and speaking in a calm, low voice. "Worthy, at least, of more than a love some minutes old—a hand pledged to one person, and offered to another—and a fortune I despise as heartily as I do the infatuation of supposing it a passport to the favour of any woman whose love is worth winning. Good Heavens, sir! In dissuading you from the folly you were bent upon committing, do you dare to imagine that I would win you for myself? Our conference has been too long. I am obliged to you for your courtesies. Not another word is needed. Farewell!"

She turned, and walked away.

"Another false move," muttered George, as he gazed after her. "Shall I never regain my balance?"

He walked thoughtfully towards the house, taking, however, a different path from Esther's, but had not made many steps, when one of the

under gardeners, bursting through the belt of shrubs, came running, hoe in hand, to meet him.

"Redditch! what now? What's the matter?" asked his master.

The man thrust his hoe into George's hand.

"Swartz—Swartz—Swartz!" he gasped, breathlessly.

"Swartz! What of him? Collect yourself, man. What do you mean?"

"He've gone mad, Sir George! Raging wild about the garden, snapping savage at everything he come near! Here he comes, by the Lord!" added Mr. Redditch, with a decided disposition to take to his heels.

A large black object was visible, for a moment, glancing across the flower-beds, and taking a direction which, intersecting, at a right angle, the path on which they stood, would lead the infuriated beast upon Esther's track.

"Stand behind me," said George. "Keep quite still. I am going to whistle. If he notices it, have no fear. A mad dog never regards his master, nor turns to signal."

Mr. Redditch did not seem to relish the experiment, but he stood his ground.

The black mass came bounding into the gravel-walk, some forty yards distant. George whistled sharply, and called:

"Swartz—Swartz!"

The animal seemed to swerve, as though recognising the summons, but next moment, with a sprawling plunge, dashed himself through the opposing shrubs, and continued his furious way.

Seriously alarmed, George set off at once in pursuit, followed by Redditch, armed, by this time, with a stout stake. At the place where the dog had made his blundering charge through the covert, beads and flakes of foam were plainly visible on the stems. It seemed but too plain that Swartz, a powerful mastiff, had become rabid.

The alarm had already spread. Shouts and cries were heard from the vicinity of the stables, and thither the young man bent his flying steps. All was evidently in commotion.

"Where is he, boy? Where is he?" called out George, catching by the sleeve an excited stable-boy who came rushing forth.

"Oh, sir, the gun! the gun!" cried the boy.

"To my room. The first you find. Away with you. Is—is Miss——"

But the lad was already out of hearing.

In the stable-yard a singular scene presented itself. Crowded in the stable windows, mounted on ladder, wall, the roofs of dog-kennels, or any other secure position, almost the whole household of Gosling Graize were assembled, watching with intense anxiety the proceedings of Swartz and a little stable-lad, the brother of him who had been despatched for the gun.

The dog had penned the boy into a corner, and, though as yet without doing him any injury, lay on the ground within a yard of him, his great black head between his paws, wallowing in foam, and his blood-red eyes glaring as if each moment he were about to make a deadly spring. Why he did not, seemed to be the mystery. With the spurning of his hinder paws the animal had thrown up a regular outwork

behind him, and it was manifest that this incessant movement was edging him nearer and nearer to his prisoner. As for the latter—a fine little boy about ten, and hitherto enjoying the most friendly relations with Swartz—he sat paralysed with terror, his blue eyes opened to their full extent, as if fascinated by the danger from which he could not escape. Attempts to drive the dog away had so evidently added to his fury, that it had been resolved to leave him alone until fire-arms were at hand.

The young master thought differently. To his generous heart the boy's danger seemed too imminent to admit of a moment's delay. Disregarding the remonstrances of his servants, and taking no notice of a spasmodic shriek emitted, as in duty bound, by Mrs. Turnover, George walked steadily towards the crouching dog, and spoke to him in a tone of quiet, sharp command.

Swartz uttered a low growl, and flung the foam from his vexed jaws, but never took his eyes from his little prisoner.

"Listen, boy," said George; "I am about to take off the dog's attention. The instant his eye is off you, use your legs."

The boy's lips moved in assent.

"Come, sir, to kennel," said George, and, as he spoke, struck the hoe he carried sharply on the ground close to the dog.

Quick as lightning the brute was upon him, seizing him by the leg. It was an exchange of prisoners, for, hardly less swiftly, the boy had vanished from his perilous position, and was in safety. A loud cry burst from the spectators, and two or three of the men, shamed by the urgency of the occasion, were hastening forward to their master's assistance. But he motioned them back. Though held as in a vice, George's boots had resisted the animal's teeth, and he was as yet perfectly uninjured.

But what was now to be done? A gun had been brought and charged with swan-shot, but none dared use it while man and dog retained their relative positions. Neither was it possible to convey the weapon into George's hand, it being all but certain that the infuriated beast would only quit his present hold to fasten, perhaps with more fatal effect, upon the first who approached him. To complete the difficulties of the situation, the iron portion of the hoe had, when struck upon the ground, become detached from the handle, thus depriving George of all chance of dealing an effective blow at his dangerous assailant.

At this moment Esther, prepared for departure, and astonished at the sudden solitude that seemed to reign within the house, made her appearance on the scene. A few words made her acquainted with the danger that impended over the young master of the house, and the difficulty of interposition. The girl's face became scarlet, then white as snow. Without betraying the slightest apprehension, she approached within a pace of the dog, and, stooping slightly, strove to engage his attention. The

animal's rolling eye met hers, and became fixed. He ceased to shake and mouth the object on which his fangs had closed, and George was even sensible of some relaxation of his vice-like hold. Would he spring upon the new comer?

"For God's sake," began George, trying a last appeal.

"Be silent!" was Esther's only reply, her eye never quitting that of the dog. To the amazement of everybody, Swartz now displayed evident symptoms of quailing. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, he detached his teeth from George's boots. Then Esther slowly extended her hand. Swartz shrank back an inch or two, shook the foam from his jaws, and uttered a piteous whine. As if this had been a signal of surrender, the brave girl, without further hesitation, put her hand between his collar and his shaggy neck, and turned him in the direction of a vacant kennel, close at hand. Yielding to the impulse, Swartz suffered himself to be conducted thither, and secured to the chain. But the excitement was not yet over. In turning, Esther's foot came in contact with the water-can placed there for the usual occupant of the kennel, and upset it. With the bound of a tiger, the dog instantly flew at her; but, checked by the chain, only touched her wrist and hand sufficiently to smear them with the mucous fluid that fringed his jaws.

George had recognised the fatal sign—even if the frightful appearance of the dog, reared on end, and snapping with convulsive fury at fancied objects around, had not of itself been proof sufficient. There was but one thing to do, and no time to lose in doing it. The staple that held the chain was of no great strength, and might yield before the powerful strain. He beckoned to the keeper, who put the gun into his hand.

"Farewell, my brave old boy!" he said, regretfully, and fired.

The foam changed to blood, and Swartz rolled over dead.

"Where is Miss Vann?" asked George, looking round for his young preserver.

"In the 'ouse, I think, Sir George," said Mr. Fanshaw. "I think she got a little faintyish, Sir George. Shall I tell her you wants to see her, Sir George?"

"Do no such thing," said his master, and walked into the house.

Mr. Fanshaw took a letter from his pocket, and examined it.

"There's somethin' inside o' you, I can feel," he muttered. Now, *what*? Shall I give it him now? I ort to. But, somehow, he don't seem in good cue."

And Mr. Fanshaw thoughtfully followed his master.

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BLACK SHEEP!

By the AUTHOR of "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER II. IN CONFERENCE.

It is nine o'clock in the morning, and breakfast is on the table in the pretty breakfast-room at Poynings. Mrs. Carruthers presides over the breakfast-table, and Clare is occupied in arranging some flowers which have just been sent in by the head gardener—sweet, fresh flowers, partaking alike of the brightness of spring and the sweetness of summer, for the April showers have fulfilled their mission, and the earth is alike glowing and redolent. Through the bow-window, opened in fear and trembling by Clare before her uncle's appearance, and hitherto unnoticed by that potentate, who has a vivid dread of rheumatism, comes a soft air laden with delicious scent of new-mown grass; for close underneath three men are busily engaged in trimming the broad lawn, and the sound of their swiftly plied whetstones and the hum of their talk in their occasional intervals of rest has penetrated into the room, and makes a kind of human accompaniment to Mr. Carruthers's strictly unhuman and intonative manner of reading the morning prayers. Spreading far away, and bordered in the extreme distance of a sloping shoulder of Surrey down, lies the glorious Kentish landscape, dotted here and there with broad red-faced farmsteads and lowly labourers' cots, with vast expanse of green and springing wheat and hop-grounds, where the parasite has as yet scarcely taken the tall poles within its pliant embrace, with thick plantations and high chalk cuttings, over which the steam from the flying train hangs like a vaporous wreath. In the immediate neighbourhood of the house the big elm-trees, guarding on either side the carriage-drive, tossed their high heads and rustled their broad arms in all the delight of their freshly acquired greenery; dew-bathed broad upland and mossy knoll sparkle alike in the morning sun; in the silvery bosom of the little lake the reflexion of the slowly-drifting clouds rears quaint impalpable islands of strange fantastic form; within the magic square of the old red kitchen-garden wall, where rusty nails and

fragments of last year's list still hung, large cucumber and melon frames blink in the sunlight, and every little hand-light lends a scintillating ray. Over all hangs a sense of stillness and composure, of peace and rest and quietude, such as might bring balm and healing to any wounded spirit.

External influences have, however, very little effect on one of the persons in the breakfast-room, for Mrs. Carruthers is bodily ill and mentally depressed. A racking nervous headache has deprived her of sleep during the past night, and has left its traces in deep livid marks underneath her eyes. She has a worn-out look and a preoccupied manner, and while she is superintending the preparation of the Grand Lama's tea—a process about which he is particular, and which is by no means to be lightly undertaken—her thoughts are far away, and her mind is full of doubts and misgiving. Why did her husband come back so suddenly from the agricultural meeting yesterday? Could he by any means have been aware of George's presence in the neighbourhood; and, if so, had he hastened his return with the view of detecting him? If so, he had providentially been thwarted in his plan. Nurse Ellen had seen the boy, and had conveyed to him the bracelet; the means of release from his surrounding difficulties were now in his hands, and the mother felt sure, from his manner, that he would keep his word, and never again subject himself to such a fearful risk. All danger surely must be over; no hint had been dropped by her husband of the slightest suspicion, and yet Mrs. Carruthers watches every change of his countenance, listens nervously to every footfall on the stairs, hears with a heart-beat the creak of every opening door, and is, obviously, constrained and wretched and ill at ease.

Clare notices this pityingly and with wonder; Mr. Carruthers notices it too, with wonder, but without any pity, but he resents it, in point of fact, silently and with dignity. That Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings should "mope" and be "out of sorts" is a kind of reflection on Mr. Carruthers of Poynings, which that gentleman by no means approves of. Over the top of his rustling newspaper he looks at his wife with severe glances levelled from under knitted brows; between his occasional bites of toast he gives a short, sharp, irritable cough; now and then he

drums with his fingers on the table, or taps his foot impatiently on the floor. No notice of these vagaries is taken by either of the ladies, it being generally understood at Poyning's that the Grand Lama will always find vent in speech when the proper time arrives. Meanwhile, Mrs. Carruthers moodily broods over the breakfast equipage, and Clare continues her handiwork with the flowers.

The Grand Lama becomes more and more irate, glares through his gold double eye-glasses at the newspaper, wherein he is reading atrociously "levelling" views promulgated by a correspondent, gives utterance to smothered sounds indicative of indignation and contempt, and is just about to burst forth in a torrent of rage, when the door opens, and a footman, entering, hands a card on a salver to his master. As when, in full pursuit of the flying 'matador, the bull in the arena wheels round and engages the lithe picador who has just planted a flag-bearing dart in his quivering carcase, so Mr. Carruthers turns upon the servant who had interposed between him and the intended objects of his attack.

"What's this?" said he, in a sharp voice.

"Card, sir," said the footman, utterly unmoved, and with the complacent expression of an ancient gargoyle on a Saxon church.

"Do you think I'm blind?" said his master. "I see it's a card. Where did it come from?"

"Gentleman in the library, sir. Said you was at breakfast; told me no 'urry, and giv' me his card."

Mr. Carruthers looks up suspiciously at Thomas, footman, but Thomas, footman, is still gurgoylesque. Then Mr. Carruthers replaces his eye-glasses, and, looking at the card, reads thereon, in old English characters, "Mr. Dalrymple," and in pencil the words "Home Office." "I will be with the gentleman in a moment." Only stopping at the looking-glass to run his fingers through his hair and to settle the tie of his checked cravat, Mr. Carruthers creaks out of the room.

Mr. Dalrymple, of the Home Office, has established himself in a comfortable chair, from which he rises on Mr. Carruthers's entrance. He is a tall, bald-headed man, and, to Mr. Carruthers's horror, wears a full-flowing brown beard. The Grand Lama, whose ideas on this point are out of date, knows that beards are now generally worn by members of the aristocracy as well as foreigners and billiard-sharpers, but cannot conceive that any government has been so preposterously lax as to permit its officials to indulge in such nonsense. Consequently he refers to the card again, and, his first impressions being verified, is dumb with astonishment. Nevertheless, he controls his feelings sufficiently to bow and to point to a chair.

"I am an early visitor, Mr. Carruthers," says Mr. Dalrymple, "but the fact is, my business is pressing. I came down to Amherst by the mail-train last night, but I would not disturb you at so late an hour, and, moreover, I could have done no good by seeing you then; so I slept at

the inn. My visit to you is on business, as I presume you understand?"

Mr. Dalrymple says this pointedly, as the Grand Lama's face is rapidly assuming an open mouth and sunken jaw expression of idiocy. He recovers himself by an effort, and, glancing at the card, mutters "Home Office."

"Precisely," says Mr. Dalrymple. "I am principal clerk in the Home Office, and I come to you in your capacity as justice of the peace. Lord Wolstenholme, our Secretary, noticed that you generally acted as chairman of the bench of magistrates, and therefore decided that you were the proper person to be communicated with."

Mr. Carruthers's attention, which has been wandering a little—his eyes are still attracted by his visitor's beard, and he is wondering how long it has been growing, and why it should be, as it is, of two distinct shades of brown—is recalled by these words, and he mutters that he is obliged to his lordship for his opinion.

"Now, my dear Mr. Carruthers," says Mr. Dalrymple, bending forward in his chair, dropping his voice to a whisper, and looking slyly from under his bushy eyebrows, "will you allow me to ask you a question? Can you keep a secret?"

Mr. Carruthers is taken aback. From his magisterial and county-gentleman position he looks upon secrets as things exclusively appertaining to the vulgar, as connected with conspiracies, plots, swindles, and other indietable offences. Considering, however, that the matter is brought under his notice in connexion with the Home Office, he thinks he may venture to answer in the affirmative, and does accordingly.

"Ex-actly," says Mr. Dalrymple. "I knew your answer before I put the question; but in these little matters it is absolutely necessary to have perfect accuracy. Now then to the point—we are quite out of earshot. Thank you! No chance of any one listening at the doors?"

Mr. Carruthers says "No," with an expression of face which says he should very much like to catch any one there.

"Pre-cisely! Now, my dear Mr. Carruthers, I will at once put you in possession of Lord Wolstenholme's views. The fact is, that a murder has been committed, under rather peculiar circumstances, and his lordship wants your assistance in investigating the matter."

Mr. Carruthers is all attention in an instant. Every trace of pre-occupation has vanished. His visitor's beard has no kind of attraction for him now, though it is wagging close before his eyes. A murder! The worst case he had ever investigated was a doubtful manslaughter arising out of a poaching affray, and for his remarks on that he had been highly complimented in the local press; but here is murder—and his aid is enlisted by the Home Office!

"The facts of the case," continues Mr. Dalrymple, "are shortly these. A body of a man is seen floating off Paul's Wharf, and is hooked up by one of the men attached to the steam-boat

pier there. It is taken to the police station to be examined, and is then found to have been stabbed to the heart with a sharp instrument, and by a strong and clever hand. The pockets are empty, the studs have been taken from the shirt, and there is no token, pocket-book, or anything to establish its identity. 'Ordinary case enough,' you'll say, with your experience; 'ordinary case enough—drunken man decoyed into some water-side ken, robbed, and made away with—case for the police—why Lord Wolstenholme and the Home Office?' You would say that, my dear sir, influenced by your ordinary perspicacity; but I answer your 'Why.' From the appearance of this man's body, it is plain that he was not an Englishman; his clothes are not of English cut, and he had on a baize fur-lined overcoat, with a deep hood, such as no Englishman ever wears. When this description was sent to us, Lord Wolstenholme at once referred to a private correspondence which we have had with the French embassy in relation to some of the Second of December exiles who are now sheltered under the British flag, and we came to the conclusion that this was no common murder for purposes of plunder, but an act of political vengeance. Now, my dear sir, you will perceive that to penetrate a mystery of this kind is of the greatest political importance, and consequently his lordship took the matter up at once, and set every engine we have at work to elucidate it. The result of our inquiries proves that the whole chance of identification rests upon a question of coats. The last person by whom, so far as we know, the wearer of the fur-lined coat was seen alive is a waiter at a tavern in the Strand, who distinctly recollects the murdered man, whose dress he described very fully, being particularly positive about his jewellery—diamond studs, real, no 'duffers,' as he said, and of which there is no trace to be found—having dined at his eating-house, in company with another man, who had with him a blue Witney overcoat, on the inside of which was a label bearing the name of some tailor, Ewart or Evans, he is unable to state which, residing at Amherst."

"Good God!" said Mr. Carruthers, surprised out of his usual reticence. "Evans—I know the man well!"

"Very likely!" says Mr. Dalrymple, composedly. "Evans! The waiter has been had up, cross-questioned, turned inside out, but still adheres to his story. Now, as we imagine this to be a bit of political vengeance, and not an ordinary crime, and as the detectives (capital fellows in their way) have had their heads a little turned since they've been made novel heroes of, Lord Wolstenholme thought it better that I should come down into the neighbourhood of Amherst, and with your assistance try to find out where and by whom this coat was bought."

No hesitation now on Mr. Carruthers's part; he and the Home Office are colleagues in this affair. Lord Wolstenholme has shown his sagacity in picking out the active and intelligent

magistrate of the district, and he shall see that his confidence is not misplaced. Will Mr. Dalrymple breakfast? Mr. Dalrymple has breakfasted; then a message is sent to Mrs. Carruthers to say that Mr. Carruthers presumes he *may* say that Mr. Dalrymple, a gentleman from London, will join them at dinner? Mr. Dalrymple will be delighted, so long as he catches the up-mail train at Amherst at—what is it?—nine fifteen. Mr. Carruthers pledges his word that Mr. Dalrymple shall be in time, and orders the barouche round at once. Will Mr. Dalrymple excuse Mr. Carruthers for five minutes? Mr. Dalrymple will; and Mr. Carruthers goes to his dressing-room, while Mr. Dalrymple re-ensconces himself in the big arm-chair, and devotes his period of solitude to paring his nails and whistling softly the while.

The big, heavy, swinging barouche, only used on solemn occasions, such as state visits, Sunday church goings, and magisterial sittings, drawn by the two big greys, and driven by Gibson, coachman, in his silver wig, his stiff collar, and his bright top-boots, and escorted by Thomas footman, in all the bloom of blue and silver livery and drab gaiters, comes round to the front door, and the gentlemen take their places in it and are driven off. The three gardeners mowing the lawn perform Hindooish obeisances as the carriage passes them; obeisances acknowledged by Mr. Carruthers with a fore-finger lifted to the brim of his hat, as modelled on a portrait of the late Duke of Wellington. Bulger at the lodge gates pulls his forelock, and receives the same gracious return, Mr. Carruthers all the time bristling with the sense of his own importance, and inwardly wishing that he could tell gardeners, lodge-keeper, and every one they met that his companion had come from the Home Office, and that they were about together to investigate a most important case of murder. Mr. Dalrymple, on the contrary, seems to have forgotten all about the actual business under treatment, and might be a friend come on a few days' visit. He admires the scenery, asks about the shooting, gives his opinion on the rising crops, talks of the politics rife in the neighbourhood, showing, by the way, a keen knowledge of their details, and never for an instant refers to the object of their inquiry until they are nearing the town, when he suggests that they had better alight short of their destination, and proceed on foot there. There is no particular reason for this, as probably Mr. Dalrymple knows; but he has never yet pursued an official and mysterious investigation in a barouche, and it seems to him an abnormal proceeding. So Mr. Carruthers, deferring in a courtly manner to his visitor's wishes, but, at the same time, walking beside him as though he had him in charge, they alight from the carriage, bidding the servant to wait, and walk into the town, directing their steps towards Evans, tailor.

Evans, tailor, coatless, as is his wont, and with his thumbs stuck in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, is standing at his door, and greets

Mr. Carruthers with as much how as is possible to his stout figure. Could they speak to him for a moment? by all manner of means; will Mr. Carruthers walk into the back shop? where Miss Evans, a buxom girl with many shaking curls, is discovered working a pair of Berlin wool slippers, at a glance too small for her father, and is put to flight with much blushing and giggling. The two gentlemen seat themselves in the old-fashioned black horsehair chairs, and Mr. Evans, a little excited, stands by them with his thumbs in his arm-holes, and flaps his hands occasionally, as though they were fins.

"This gentleman, Mr. Evans," says Mr. Carruthers—giving this happy specimen of his acumen and discretion in a loud and pompous tone—"has come from Lord Wolstenholme, the Secretary of State for the Home Department." Mr. Evans gives a fin-flap, indicative of profound respect. "He has been sent here to—"

"Will you permit me in the very mildest manner to interrupt you, my dear sir?" says Mr. Dalrymple, in dulcet accents. "You put the matter admirably—from the magisterial point of view—but perhaps if I were just to— You have no objection? Thank you! You've lived a long time in Amherst, Mr. Evans?"

"I've been a master tailor here, sir, forty-three years last Michaelmas."

"Forty-three years! Long time, indeed! And you're the tailor of the neighbourhood, eh?"

"Well, sir, I think I may say we make for all the gentry round—Mr. Carruthers of Poynings, sir, and Sir Thomas Boldero, and—"

"Of course—of course! You've a gold-printed label, I think, which you generally sew on to all goods made by you?"

"We have, sir—that same. With my name upon it."

"With your name upon it. Just so! Now, I suppose that label is never sewed on to anything which has not been either made or sold by you?"

"Which has not been made, sir! We don't sell anything except our own make—Evans of Amherst don't."

"Exactly; and very proper, too." To Mr. Carruthers: "Settles one point, my dear sir—must have been made here! Now, Mr. Evans, you make all sorts of coats, of course, blue Witney overcoats among the number?"

Mr. Evans, after a hesitating fin-flap, says: "A blue Witney overcoat, sir, is a article seldom if ever called for in these parts. I shouldn't say we'd made one within the last two years—leastways, more than one."

"But you think you did make one?"

"There were one, sir, made to order from a party that was staying at the Lion."

"Staying at the Lion? The inn, of course, where I slept last night. How long ago was that?"

"That were two years ago, sir."

"That won't do!" cries Mr. Dalrymple, in disappointed tone.

"Two years ago that it were made and that the party was at the Lion. The coat was sold less than three months ago."

"Was it? To whom?"

"To a stranger—a slim young gent who came in here one day promiscuous, and wanted an overcoat. He had that blue Witney, he had!"

"Now, my dear Mr. Evans," says Mr. Dalrymple, laying his hand lightly on Mr. Evans's shirt-sleeve, and looking up from under his bushy brows into the old man's face, "just try and exercise your memory a little about this stranger. Give us a little more description of him—his age, height, general appearance, and that sort of thing!"

But Mr. Evans's memory is quite unaccustomed to exercise, and cannot be jogged, or ensnared, or bullied into any kind of action. The stranger was young, "middling height," appearance, "well, gen-teel and slim-like;" and wild horses could not extract further particulars from Mr. Evans than these. Stay. "What did he give for the coat, and in what money did he pay for it?" There's a chance. Mr. Evans remembers that he "gev fifty-three-and-six for the overcoat, and handed in a ten-pun' note for change. A ten-pound note, which, as Mr. Evans, by a further tremendous effort, recollects, had "the stamp of our post-office on it, as I pinte'd out to the gent at the time." Was the note there? No; Mr. Evans had paid it into the County Bank to his little account with some other money, but he quite recollected the post-office stamp being on it.

Mr. Carruthers thinks this a great point, but is dashed by Mr. Dalrymple's telling him, on their way from the tailor's, that all bank-notes passing through post-offices receive the official stamp. This statement is corroborated at the Amherst Post-office, where no money-order of that amount, or of anything equivalent to that amount, has been recently paid, the remittances in that form being, as the postmaster explains, generally to the canal boatmen or the railway people, and of small value.

So there the clue fails suddenly and entirely, and Mr. Carruthers and Mr. Dalrymple again mount the big swinging barouche and are driven back to Poynings to dinner, which meal is not, however, graced by the presence of either of the ladies; for Mrs. Carruthers is too ill to leave her room, and Clare is in attendance on her. So the gentlemen eat a solemn dinner by themselves, and talk a solemn conversation; and at eight o'clock Mr. Dalrymple goes away, driven by Gibson, coachman, in the carriage, and turning over in his mind how best to make something out of the uneventful day for the information of the Home Secretary.

That dignitary occupies also much of the attention of Mr. Carruthers, left in dignified solitude in the dining-room before the decanters of wine and the dishes of fruit, oblivious of his wife's indisposition, and wholly unobservant of the curiosity with which Mr. Downing, his butler and body-servant, surveys him on entering the room to suggest the taking of tea. Very unusual is it for the Poynings servants to regard their master with curiosity, or indeed with any feeling that

bears the semblance of interest; but, be the cause what it may, there is no mistaking the present expression of Downing's face. Surprise, curiosity, and something which, if it must be called fear, is the pleasant and excited form of that feeling, prompt Mr. Downing to look fixedly at his master, who sits back in his chair in an attitude of magisterial cogitation, twirling his heavy gold eye-glass in his bony white hands, and lost in something which resembles thought more closely than Mr. Carruthers's mental occupation can ordinarily be said to do. There he sits, until he resolves to take his niece Clare into confidence, tell her of the visit he has received from the gentleman from the Home Office, and ask her whether she can make anything of it, which resolution attained, and finding by his watch that the hour is half-past ten, and that therefore a Carruthers of Poynings may retire to rest if he chooses without indecorum, the worthy gentleman creaks up-stairs to his room, and in a few minutes is sleeping the sleep of the just. Mrs. Carruthers—Clare having been some time previously dismissed from the room—also seems to sleep soundly; at least her husband has seen that her eyes are closed.

Her rest, real or pretended, would have been none the calmer had she been able to see her faithful old servant pacing up and down the housekeeper's room, and wringing her withered hands in an agony of distress; for the servant who had gone to Amherst with Mr. Carruthers and his mysterious visitor in the morning had learned the meaning and purpose of the two gentlemen's visit to Evans, the tailor, and had made it the subject of a lively and sensational conversation in the servants' hall. Although literature was not in a very flourishing condition at Amherst, the male domesticities of the household at Poynings were not without their sources of information, and had thoroughly possessed themselves of the details of the murder.

Mrs. Brookes had heard of the occurrence two or three times in the course of the preceding day but she had given it little attention. She was in her own room when the servants returned with the carriage which had taken Mr. Dalrymple to the railway station, having visited her mistress for the last time that evening, and was thinking, sadly enough, of George, when the entrance of the upper housemaid, her eager face brimful of news, disturbed her.

"Oh, Mrs. Brookes," she began, "do you know who that gentleman was as dined here, and went to the town with master?"

"No, I don't," said Mrs. Brookes, with some curiosity; "do you?"

"Not exactly; but Thomas says Home Office were wrote on his card, and Home Office has something to do with finding people out when they've been a-doing anything."

Mrs. Brookes began to feel uncomfortable. "What do you mean?" she said. "Who's been doing anything that wants finding out?"

"Nobody as I knows," replied Martha, looking knowing and mysterious. "Only, you

know, that murder as Mr. Downing read us the inquest of, and how it's a foreigner as has been killed because he wouldn't help to blow up the King of France; at least, there's something of that in it. Well, Mr. Downing thinks as the gentleman come about that."

"About that, *here*?" said Mrs. Brookes. "Whatever has put such a notion into Mr. Downing's head as that?"

"Well, Mrs. Brookes, this is it: they're all talking about it in the hall, and so I thought I'd just come and tell you. Master and the stranger gentleman didn't take the carriage right on into town; they got out just inside the pike, and went on by themselves; and, when they came back, master he looked very red and grand-looking, and the strange gentleman he looked as if he was rare disappointed and put out, and, as he was a-shutting the door of the brouche, Thomas heard him saying, 'No, no; there's nothing more to be done. Evans was our only chance, and he's no use.' So nat'rally Thomas wonders whatever they've been about, and what was their business with Evans; so he and coachman wasn't sorry this evening when the strange gentleman was gone by the train, and they see Evans a-loungin' about, a-flapping his hands, which he's always doing of it, up by the station. He were lookin' at the strange gentleman as sharp as sharp, as they drove up to the bookin'-office; and when they came out, there he were, and coachman tells 'em all about it."

"All about *what*?" asks Mrs. Brookes, sharply.

"All about what brought master and the other gentleman to his shop; and it's his belief, as master said more than the other gentleman wanted him to say; for master let out as how a murder had something to do with the business."

"What business, Martha? Do tell me what you mean, if you want me to listen to you any longer. How could Mr. Carruthers want to know anything from Evans about a murder?"

"Lor, ma'am, it weren't about the murder; it were about the coat! Master told Evans as how there had been a murder, and the other gentleman took master up rather shorter, Evans thinks, than master is accustomed to be took, and asked him no end of questions—did he make such and such coats? and who did he sell 'em to? and partic'lar did he sell Witney coats? which Mr. Evans said he didn't in general, and had only sold one in two years, which the strange gentleman wanted to know what sort of gent had had it, and were he young or old, or good-looking or ornary, and a morn't of questions; wherein Evans answered him to the best of his ability, but, being a man of his word, he couldn't make it no clearer than he could."

"What *did* he make clear?" asked Mrs. Brookes. "Two years is a long time to remember the sale of a coat."

"It wasn't so long since it were sold. Mr. Evans sold it six weeks ago, but it were two years made."

Mrs. Brookes's heart gave a great bound, and

her old eyes grew dim; but she was a brave woman, and Martha, housemaid, was a dull one.

"Did Mr. Evans not succeed in describing the person who bought the coat, then?"

"He thinks not; but he says he should know him again immediate, if he saw him. The strange gentleman didn't seem over-pleased that his memory was so short; but lor', who's to know all about the eyeses and the noses of everybody as comes to buy a coat, or whot not?—partic'lar if you don't know as he's been a committen of a murder. If you did, why, you'd look at him closer like, I should say!"

"Has Mr. Downing got the paper with the murder of the foreigner in it?" asked Mrs. Brookes.

"Yes, he have; he's just been reading it all over again in the hall. And he says as how master's in a brown study, as he calls it; only it's in the dining-room, and he's sure as the fluding-out people has put it into his hands."

"When he has done with the paper, ask him to let me see it, Martha. Very likely this stranger's visit has nothing to do with the matter. Downing finds out things that nobody else can see."

Martha was an admirer and partisan of Mr. Downing, from the humble and discreet distance which divides a housemaid from a butler, and she did not like to hear his discretion aspersed.

"It looks as if he was right this time, however," she replied; "though it wasn't Tim the tinker as stole Sir Thomas's spoons, which Mr. Downing never had a good opinion of him; but when there ain't nothing clearer than the person who was seen at the eating-house with the victim" (Martha "took in" the Hatchet of Horror every week, and framed her language on that delightful model) "had on a coat as Evans made, it looks as if he wasn't altogether in the wrong, now don't it, Mrs. Brookes?"

Mrs. Brookes could not deny that it looked very like that complimentary conclusion, and her brave old heart almost died within her. But she kept down her fear and horror, and dismissed Martha, telling her to bring her the paper as soon as she could. The woman returned in a few moments, laid the newspaper beside Mrs. Brookes, and then went off to enjoy a continuation of the gossip of the servants' hall. Very exciting and delightful that gossip was, for though the servants had no inkling of the terribly strong interest, the awfully near connexion, which existed for Poyning's in the matter, it was still a great privilege to be "in" so important an affair by even the slender link formed by the probable purchase of a coat at Amherst by the murderer. They enjoyed it mightily; they discussed it over and over again, assigning to the murdered man every grade of rank short of royalty, and all the virtues possible to human nature. The women were particularly eloquent and sympathising, and Martha "quite cried," as she speculated on the great probability of there being a broken-hearted sweetheart in the case.

In the housekeeper's room, Mrs. Brookes sat poring over the terrible story, to which she

had listened carelessly on the previous day, as the servants talked it vaguely over. From the first words Martha had spoken, her fears had arisen, and now they were growing every instant to the terrible certainty of conviction. What if the wretched young man, who had already been the cause of so much misery, had added this fearful crime to the long catalogue of his follies and sins?

All the household sleeps, and the silence of the night is in every room but one. There Mrs. Brookes still sits by the table with the newspaper spread before her, lost in a labyrinth of fear and anguish; and from time to time her grief finds words, such as:

"How shall I tell her? How shall I warn her? O George, George! O my boy! my boy!"

JOE MILLER AND HIS MEN.

THE name of Joseph (more succinctly and familiarly Joe) Miller brings back before us, life-size, the face of an honest, grave, respectable, taciturn English comedian, in hat and wig of the period (Georgio Secundo Gloriosissimo Regnante). Not one of the light-heeled play-acting crew, but a performer who trod the boards of Drury, heavily, in Colley Cibber's day, with a proper sense of the sobrieties and gravities of broad comic life.

The want of family papers is one to be lamented in the conduct of many biographical inquiries of the highest moment, and perhaps no more striking instance could be found of the loss posterity has suffered under this head than the case of the late Mr. Joseph Miller. The materials for this biography are so distressingly slight, that Miller lives for us only in a few straggling and insulated facts. We know nearly as little of him as Mr. Stevens knew of William Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon; though not quite so little. We have plays by Mr. Shakespeare, and if we have none by Mr. Miller, we have playbills and the book which passes current as Joe Miller's Jests. This book is itself a joke. As there are notorious wits, so there are men notorious for never having made a joke themselves, nor seen the point of another man's joke, in their lives. Mr. Miller's celebrity sprang from the latter cause. Mr. Miller, a man of social habits, fond of company, of tobacco, and of good cheer, seldom spoke and never laughed. In the scale of literary attributes, his abilities pointed to zero; for he could neither read nor write, and he learned the parts with which he adorned the stage, orally: his wife proving herself the better half by reading them to him. Yet he held a good place among such sterling theatrical geniuses of the pre-Garrick school as Barton Booth, Wilkes, Dogget, Cibber, Norris, Pinkethman, Spiller, and others, immortalised in the *Fatler and Spectator*, and while Sir Richard Steele was one of the royal patentees. He filled, with general applause, the parts of Clodpole, in the *Amorous Widow*, and Ben, in *Love for Love*. In the *King and the Miller of Mansfield*, the Miller was appro-

priately performed by Mr. Miller. But his supreme effort, suiting as it did his natural bent, was Trim, in Steele's Funeral, or Grief à la Mode.

Mark what happened in the year seventeen hundred and thirty-eight, and in the month of August. Mr. Miller died, leaving a widow. The question was, what was to become of her? Such questions will arise when tangible estate dies with the owner. In this case, however, the departed left a name, and an acute publisher found the answer in that name.

This was an epoch when the public had a sweet tooth for dead players' jokes. Consequently, dead players' jokes were the only articles of this special description worthy their paper and print; singular as it may appear, no man, unless perchance he was a dead player, joked in those days. If we might take certain title-pages upon trust, these dead players were a marvellously mercurial race, making, during their whole lives' time, hoards of the primest fun, and not letting a soul have the faintest inkling of it until they were fairly under ground. Of these jest-books, previously put out by the hearse-load, none were so popular as Spiller's Jests and Pinkethman's (elliptically Pinkey's) Jests.

What was mortal of Mr. Miller had been placed under a stone in St. Clement's churchyard, Portugal-street. We proceed with the story of his less perishable part—his name.

There was then established in Dogwell-court, Whitefriars, a bookseller and stationer, named Read: a person of a shrewd and speculative turn of mind. Mr. Read was what we call not a first-class publisher, yet a pushing man, most valuable to literary gentlefolks-errant who were in want of occasional jobs, or in possession, by some rare piece of good fortune, of an idea calculated to put small sums of money into their own pockets, and large sums into Mr. Read's.

Whether Mr. Read himself originated the notion that there was a good deal in Mr. Miller's name *quasi* Dead Player, and spake on the subject to a gentleman whom he believed able to assist him; or, whether it was the gentleman who took the bold initiative, is not now ascertainable. At any rate, enter Mr. Mottley. Mr. Mottley had seen better days, and was just then seeing very bad days. It had lately gone worse and worse with him.

Mr. John Mottley—a real name, and not a practical joke—was only son and heir of John Mottley, lieutenant-colonel in the service of his Sacred Majesty King James the Second, and afterwards commandant of a regiment in that of the most Christian monarch Louis the Fourteenth, recommended for the post by his Sacred Majesty King James, who had retired from business to St. Germain, and referred persons, applying for situations, elsewhere. The colonel was unlucky enough to be killed in seventeen hundred and six, at the battle of Turin.

Young Mottley does not seem, at any period of his life, to have lain under particularly weighty obligations to his father, the favourite of two kings. His mother was no Jacobite, and from the mother's friends, the Guises and Lord Howe,

he derived whatever means of support he ever had, independently of literature. His father was a spendthrift, and he did not very much care whether it was his own money he ran through, or somebody else's. His mother, a Guise by birth, had a fortune of her own, and her father at his death left her son, Mr. Read's casual acquaintance, a second. The colonel all but dissipated the one, and Mrs. Mottley's debts swallowed up the other. Still, young John had friends, who kept him alive and tolerably well for several years on two splendid promises and one small place in the Excise. Moreover, Lord Halifax, during his lord treasurership, gave his word to Mottley that he should be a commissioner of wine licenses. The only circumstance which prevented the fulfilment of the promise was that, just before the place was to have been patented to Mottley, somebody else got it.

John Mottley's next episode was a bit of downright cruel dealing. In seventeen hundred and twenty, Mr. Mottley resigned his emoluments in the Excise, on being appointed by Sir Robert Walpole an officer in the Exchequer. He thought he had found smooth water at last. But even when Mr. Mottley had become entitled to draw no more than three days' pay, came the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole's compliments to Mr. Mottley, and was exceedingly sorry he should only just have recollected that the place was bespoken for Mr. — somebody else! It did not occur to the right honourable gentleman that his honour was in any way concerned in providing other employment for Mottley, and the latter was thrown upon the world simply destitute.

Bereft of all hope of aid from his own family, abominably deluded by ministers, poor John Mottley, broken down in health and spirits, was reduced to the need of earning his bread how he could. He wrote plays which were not unsuccessful. Of four or so, he was the unassisted author, and he was concerned in others. He sold his talents to the booksellers. He became acquainted with strange associates. His was soon among the familiar faces at the coffee-houses and other places of entertainment resorted to by the wits and the literati of all grades.

It seemed as if Mottley were to be haunted by that bad genius of his, ill-luck, to his life's end. He had no sooner got into a fair connexion with the theatres, than the gout took the use of his right hand away, and thenceforth he was a confirmed valetudinarian. Mottley was in this sad predicament, crippled and half bedridden, when one day, in seventeen hundred and thirty-nine, quite early, Mr. Read, of Dogwell-court, called on him touching a little literary business. It was thought that it would be a profitable jest to gather together all the good things about town, put them into a shilling book, and make the late Joe Miller, notoriously as impervious to a joke as a Quaker, its foster-father. Mottley would have been a name of names for the title-page, one would have fancied; but Mr. Read held differently. Mottley was not a dead player, and Miller was. People who knew anything, knew that the late Mr. Miller was one of the

dullest dogs that ever sipped ale out of a black jack; and when they saw with their own bodily eyes Joe Miller's Jest on every stall, what a merry sensation there would be in all the old actor's old haunts about Drury-lane, and what a stir among the mighty butchers of Clare Market, who would spare a shilling, every butcher of them, to see what it *could* all mean. Mottley even sunk his name, assuming that of Mr. Miller's "lamenting friend and former companion," Elijah Jenkins, Esq.

Anyhow, it was a bouncing shilling's worth, and Mr. Read cleared a very handsome profit. Let us hope that Mr. Read did not forget the widow. The title-page ran thus:

"Joe Miller's *Jests*: or, The Wit's *Vade-Mecum*. Being a Collection of the most Brilliant Jest; the Politest Repartees; the most Elegant Bon-Mots, and most pleasant short Stories in the *English* Language.

"First carefully collected in the Company, and many of them transcribed from the Mouth, of the Facetious GENTLEMAN whose Name they bear; and now set forth and published by his lamentable friend and former companion, *Elijah Jenkins*, Esq.

Most Humbly Inscribed

To those CHOICE SPIRITS of the AGE,
Captain Bodens, Mr. Alexander Pope,
Mr. Professor Lacy, Mr. Orator Henley,
and Job Baker, the Kettle-Drummer.

London:

Printed and Sold by T. Read, in *Dogwell Court*,
White Fryars, Fleet-street. MDCCXXXIX.

(Price One Shilling.)

So there was laughter all round in the Jubilee year, seventeen hundred and thirty-nine, when JOE MILLER'S JESTS, OR THE WIT'S VADE-MECUM, came from Mr. T. Read's Printing and Publishing Office, Dogwell-court, Whitefriars, Price One Shilling.

The public laughed, as those laugh who love good jokes, brimming measure; and Mr. T. Read laughed, as those laugh, who win. For, in the soberest seriousness, we take it that he went shares with Mottley and the widow, much in the same manner as the lion in the fable goes shares with the ass.

The jokes about town at that immediate period embraced an extraordinarily wide range, and the pseudo-Jenkins collection abounds in illustrations of those minuter traits of character, which lend us, coming afterwards, such an insight into the men. Here we are presented with the choicest memorabilia possible concerning King Charles the Second, of ever-worshipful remembrance; Mr. Gun Jones; Sir Richard Steele; the Duchess of Portsmouth, a Country Clergyman, Mrs. C.—m, Sir William Davenant, Ben Jonson, two Free-thinking Authors, A Very Modest Young Gentleman of the County of Tipperary, Lord R., Tom Burnet, Henry the Fourth of France, the Emperor Tiberius, and others too numerous to rehearse.

But—and this has been hitherto a secret among these gems of wit and humour—there crept in, unawares, two items, which breathe an abnormally Christian and reflective spirit, and

which we learn, from sources inaccessible to the editor of 1739, were Mr. Miller's own composition. We must go to the works of some men, if we wish to understand their true dispositions and temperaments. Let us, for this purpose, go to the works of Mr. Miller, luminous, though not voluminous. The first is moral, the second philosophical. To begin with the moral (instead of ending with it):

"Jo Miller, sitting one day in the window of the Sun Tavern, in Clare-street, a fishwoman and her maid passing by, the woman said, 'Buy my souls, buy my maids!' 'Ah, you wicked old creature!' said honest Jo. 'What! Are you not content to sell your own soul, but you would sell your maid's too?'"

If this were really a joke made, hibernicæ, by a man whose intelligence was joke-proof, there would be an end of the jest of imputed authorship; but it is nothing of the kind. The horrid cry reached Mr. Miller's ear as a detestable fact, and he prosed it out to his friends with the settled conviction that, under pretence of selling fish, the costerwoman carried on some other traffic.

This concludes the moral works of Mr. Miller. The philosophical works now commence, and into these the sentimental element has manifestly been infused.

"It is certainly the most transcendent pleasure to be agreeably surprised with the confession of love from an adored mistress. A young gentleman, after a very great misfortune, came to his mistress, and told her he was reduced even to the want of five guineas. To which she replied, 'I am glad of it with all my heart.' 'Are you so, madam?' adds he, suspecting her constancy; 'pray, why so?' 'Because,' said she, 'I can furnish you with five thousand!'"

This ends the Philosophical and Sentimental Works of Mr. Miller, heretofore (in common with the former) undiscerningly printed with all the editions of the book vulgarly denominated *Joe Miller's Jests*.

As to Mr. Mottley, the reduced gentleman and disappointed candidate for government patronage, the gout let him live long enough to see many and many an impression of *Joe Miller's Jests* pass from the bookseller's counter to the always-rightly-appreciating public; but neither his name nor that of the Widow Miller appeared after 1739, that we can discover, in the credit column of Mr. Read's ledgers. The longevity of misfortune and misery was exemplified in Mottley. He kept alive (principally between blankets) till the year of Joe Miller's Jests, eleven. In 1750, death took him away. The hand of the harvestman was quickly cold, and almost as quickly his name sank out of recollection. Even the generation of which he was one, forgot him, perhaps, notwithstanding the place accorded to him in some of the dictionaries of the time, and among the neat little memoirs which supplement Winchope's tragedy of Scanderbeg. If he were remembered, it was as a dramatist chiefly. But Mottley's plays have vanished long since into limbo, and his present and future claim to notice must rest upon his

intimate identification with one of the most permanently popular books in the English language.

FRESH AT FRESHWATER.

My reason for putting the following plain statement on paper is a very simple one. I wish to enter a protest against what appears to me to be one of the specially crying evils of the day. It seems to me, then, that anybody who chooses is allowed to hold out—in programmes, advertisements, and the like—delusive hopes to his fellow-creatures, making, on paper, all sorts of promises to the public which are never to be fulfilled, as nobody knows better than the promise-maker himself. Why, to take an instance, are people allowed to talk to me through the advertising columns of the newspapers about “Painless Dentistry” or “luxuriant crops of hair and whisker”? Is that dentistry painless? Can any dentistry be painless? It is surely not right to talk about painless dentistry, any more than it is to vaunt in print the virtues of that peculiar specific by the use of which it is alleged that the luxuriant whiskers can be induced to sprout. Ask my younger brother? I know something of what ambitious views in the matter of whisker have cost him, and I also know that, up to this very hour, he has never gained so much as a single hair by all his reckless expenditure.

But it is not upon the subject of advertisements—newspaper advertisements, that is—that I propose, just now, to enlarge. My attention has been called to this system of delusive promise-making, of which I complain, not exactly by an advertisement, using the word in its most ordinary acceptation, but rather by a little local programme, printed on a card, and widely circulated in the small watering-place of Freshwater, where I have been recently staying.

If the reader proposes to go and reside for a few weeks at this village of Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, I should be sorry to say anything that might deter him from doing so, but still I must admit that it is a place of few resources. You can walk along the downs, certainly, to Alum Bay, or you can retire up the country and please yourself among the lanes with their farm-houses covered with myrtle and fuchsias. There is a coach, again, which runs twice a day to Yarmouth and back, a distance of about four miles; you can go to Yarmouth by that coach, it is certain, but what then? There is nothing to be done at Yarmouth when you get there. If you want to vegetate for a while—and it is good to do so sometimes—Freshwater is the right place for the purpose; but when you have vegetated enough, and begin to stand in need of a little excitement, then are you apt to find that Freshwater is decidedly the wrong place.

I did not always think this. For one brief period, during my stay in this small settlement, I was under the impression that I had chanced upon a corner of the world so rich beyond all others in natural wonders and phenomena, that

those who visited it could never feel inclined to complain of its being deficient to a certain point in those more ordinary sources of amusement and excitement which we poor mortals are usually apt to crave after. I will at once acknowledge that I was led to this conclusion by the document above alluded to, which came into my hands quite accidentally, and which was, in fact, to quote the card itself, “An Abstract of the Beauties and Curiosities seen by Water from Freshwater Bay to Alum Bay.”

I subjoin the list of wonders:

1. Freshwater Cavern.
2. Watcombe Bay: a tall pyramidal rock; and numerous romantic caverns.
3. Neptune's large Cave, two hundred feet deep; small, ninety feet.
4. Bar Cave, ninety feet deep.
5. Highdown Cliffs, six hundred and seventy feet high.
6. Representation of a Lady sitting in the Cliff.
7. Frenchman's Hole, ninety feet deep.
8. Lord Holmes's Parlour and Kitchen.
9. Roe's Hall, six hundred feet high.
10. Old Pepper Rock.
11. Main Bench: principal nesting-place for the birds called puffins, willocks, razor-birds, cormorants, choughs, &c.
12. Preston's Bower.
13. Scratchell's Bay: cliffs celebrated for their beautiful stratification, and a magnificent recess, which presents the exact appearance of a grand arch, awfully overhanging the beach two hundred feet.
14. The Needles Cave, three hundred feet deep.
15. The five Needle Rocks and Alum Bay.

From the moment when this “Abstract” came into my hands, a new life seemed to develop itself within me. Shall I own that the old life was flagging a little, that I was beginning to doubt whether another week of Freshwater might not prove too much for me? Frankly, then, it was so. When the “Abstract” was handed to me by the suicidally disposed person who keeps the bazaar, I was just beginning to ask myself whether there was anything besides a fractional sacrifice of lodging-rent to hinder me from leaving the place next day, nay, that very afternoon, if I chose. I asked myself the question in an indignant fashion, for I think that I had begun to fall—it is one of the effects of certain dull places on the human subject—into a state of mental paralysis which made me feel that I *couldn't* go away, however much I might wish it.

Such was the state of my feelings before reading the “Abstract.” But how rapid are the changes to which our mental condition is liable. By the time that I had read that list of “beauties and curiosities,” nay, by the time that I had got to Number 6 in the list, “Representation of a Lady sitting in the Cliff,” I believe that no earthly inducement could have persuaded me to leave the place till I had done full justice to every one of those natural phenomena, beginning at Number 1, and ending at Number 15.

My impatience to begin was very great. I wanted to go on the afternoon of the very day which had brought me acquainted with the

"Abstract." But this was not to be. A calm day was, it appeared, desirable—indispensable even—for the carrying out of my plan. It was argued, and with some show of reason, by the nautical gentleman whom I consulted upon the subject, that as all the phenomena alluded to in the list were close in-shore, the consequences of any attempt to examine them with the sea in its present condition of roughness might be too dreadful to think of. I was easily persuaded of the truth of this statement. We might be precipitated into "Frenchman's Hole," No. 7, I argued with myself, or smashed to pieces against the "Lady sitting in the Cliff," No. 6, and never be heard of more.

There was nothing for it, then, but patience. Those persons who were at the seaside during September last will probably have no difficulty in remembering that the month in question was characterised by some exceedingly rough weather. Day after day the wind blew, and the waves dashed against the shore with such fury, that I used sometimes to fear lest the Lady sitting in the Cliff might be dashed to atoms, or Lord Holmes's parlour washed into his kitchen, or vice versa, before I should have the opportunity of seeing either the one or the other. Meanwhile, there was, at any rate, something now to live for. My imagination dwelt upon these wonders which my eyes were still forbidden to behold. I used to gaze at the small projecting cliff which shut in our bay, and reflect with awe upon the marvels which lay, out of sight, beyond it. I used to walk along the edge of the cliff above, and crane my neck over to try and catch a glimpse of some of them, No. 6 especially. "Great Heaven!" I used to say to myself, "to think of that solitary figure sitting there night and day, tranquil and unmoved." Or take No. 7 again: "How must the waters be surging and boiling in that whirlpool, as no doubt it is, which goes by the name of the 'Frenchman's Hole!'" And so I waited and speculated, and consulted the barometer, and the weather reports in the newspapers, and the gloomy mariners upon the beach.

At last, when everything was looking just as bad as it could look, when the coast was bristling with drum signals, the barometer in the lowest spirits, and the mariners looking to windward with their most despondent glances, there came a day of calm and sunshine, such as no one had expected to see before next summer, and I was solemnly informed that the weather was in all respects fitted to my purpose if I still held to my determination of going round to Alum Bay by water.

Wonderful moment when at last we turned the corner beyond the projecting cliff, and that mysterious bit of coast, which had so long occupied my thoughts, lay stretched out before us. I glanced hastily along its line—there might have been about three miles of it visible. "To think," I said to myself, "of all the marvels contained in that comparatively small space!" and my breath came thick and fast as I thought of what was coming.

We had soon got round the corner, and were rowing along slowly under the cliff, and very

near to it indeed. There was a curious little hole in it, I noticed, just at the water's edge. It was about four or five feet in diameter, apparently, and looked—if I may be allowed to use the comparison—very like the mouth of a London sewer. With some notion of inquiring whether it was at this place that the drainage of Freshwater ran into the sea, I was just going to speak to the boatman who sat nearest to me, when I observed that the man was now resting tranquilly on his oar, and apparently on the point of speaking himself; so I gave way. I got, as a reward for my courtesy, a piece of somewhat startling information.

"That, sir," said the boatman, pointing to the sewer which I have described, "that is Freshwater Cavern."

"What!" I almost shrieked. "That hole!"

"Yes, sir, that's it," replied the man with some complacency.

I believe, in my inmost heart, that I had no hope of anything that was to come, after listening to these words. If this small opening in the rock, this crevice, was regarded by the inhabitants of the place in the light of a cavern—Freshwater Cavern—all the rest of the marvels noted down in that thrice-acursed "Abstract" might simply turn out to consist of a few accidental holes in the cliff, or bits of rock of eccentric shape, which the nation had chosen to call by the first high-sounding names which came to hand.

It turned out, in fact, to be so. All the "caverns" were of this drain-like type. Even those caves of Neptune, "large cave two hundred feet deep, small ninety feet," which I had pictured to myself as vast caverns full of green transparent water, and in whose dark recesses I had intended to imagine the mermaids sitting on the rock and combing their hair, even these suggested always the sewer's mouth so strongly that there was no room left for any less ignoble idea. "The numerous romantic caverns," again, in Watcombe Bay, "The Bar Cave," it was the same with all of them—the main drainage system brought to mind at every turn.

Lord Holmes's Parlour again. I had not expected very much from that. No doubt, I thought, the most will be made of a very little. There will be a spacious cave, and in some part of it there will be a block or blocks of stone which will bear a curious resemblance to a human figure sitting in a chair. Other blocks, again, will have just enough likeness to certain pieces of furniture for one to swear by. As to the Kitchen, it will no doubt be necessary to "make believe" a little, and, that done, it may perhaps become possible to make out certain forms in the rock, which to a strong imagination may be dimly suggestive of a kitchen-range, a dresser, and the like. There will, of course, be some good old legend of the dark ages forthcoming, some weird old story of a wicked earl well worth hearing.

Poor pitiable delusion! There was nothing of the sort. A certain Lord Holmes, a nobleman concerning whom legendary lore is silent, used sometimes, when staying in the

neighbourhood, to go out shooting in a boat, and it was his custom on such occasions to land at a particular spot where there was a recess in the rock, with a convenient tract of sand in front of it, and there to partake of the refreshment of luncheon; and so the recess in question came to be called Lord Holmes's "Parlour," and another, close by, his "Kitchen." A name bestowed altogether at random, and without the shadow of a reason to justify its adoption, the cave never having been used by this excellent gentleman for any purpose whatsoever, culinary or otherwise.

But the crowning take-in of the whole collection was that particular phenomenon which, as set forth in the "Abstract," had appeared the most likely to repay me for the effort which I had resolved to make in undertaking this ill-starred cruise. Signally as the "beauties and curiosities" to which I had been already introduced had disappointed me, I had still, through all, entertained a lingering hope that the "Lady sitting in the Cliff" would turn out well, and that something very startling indeed awaited me so soon as this especial phenomenon should be brought within our range of vision. I frequently asked the mariners who had me in charge whether we were nearing the spot from which a view might be obtained of this figure, but was always met with the same answer. "You'll come upon her directly," the first boatman would say, with a sort of smack of the lips, suggestive of some great intellectual pleasure at hand. "She ain't far off." The second boatman did not speak. I thought he was not wholly destitute of a sense of shame.

"If you lean over a bit this way, sir, and look straight up where that edge of the cliff cuts agin the sky, you'll see her," said the first and most shameless boatman, speaking just at the moment when my curiosity had reached its climax.

There was at the particular place to which my attention was then called a little round nob of earth, or rock, or whatever it might be, sticking out from the cliff, and underneath this a long spouty projection ending abruptly in a sort of notch.

"Ah! nobody ain't done nothing to it," said the shameless boatman, mistaking my expression of disappointment for one of surprise and delight. "It's all natur."

The thing was too outrageous to be treated seriously. "Is it possible?" I exclaimed. "And who found it out?"

"A lady, sir," replied the man, "coasting round in a boat, just as you might be doing now. She come upon it all of a sudden, and 'Robinson,' she cried, for I was rowing of her myself, 'Robinson,' says she, 'for gracious sake, what's that?' You should ha' seen her turn pale, and stare up at it."

"It's like the figure-head of a ship, sir, ain't it?" said the other boatman, whom, up to this time, I had accredited with a conscience.

I stared with, I should think, as much intensity of astonishment as was exhibited by the original discoverer of this marvellous phenomenon. I asked myself whether it was possible that I was looking in the right direction.

"That little round nob, then," I said, interrogatively, "is the head, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir," said both the men in eager chorus.

"And that sort of sweeping projection underneath is the outline of the dress?"

"That's it," cried the men. "Extraordinary resemblance, sir, ain't it?"

"Let us go on to the next phenomenon," I said, faintly.

It was a very curious thing, but it is nevertheless true, that from the moment of my introduction to the "Lady sitting in the Cliff" I became sea-sick. I was exceedingly sick while we danced up and down in front of Frenchman's Hole—another drain, with no legend; the crew of a French ship said to have taken refuge there—quite impossible—after having been wrecked on the rocks close by. Sick and indifferent I remained, as we dipped and rose alternately for about half an hour under the influence of a groundswell; and the information conveyed to me as to the heights and depths of the different rocks and holes which we passed from time to time was, as far as I was concerned, entirely thrown away.

Whether it was in consequence of our having got into smooth water, or because, at last, there really was something to see, I cannot say; but certain it is that when, on rounding a particular corner of the cliff, we drifted suddenly and unexpectedly into Scratchell's Bay, my health, which, as I have acknowledged, had recently been so seriously affected, was restored as if by magic. Scratchell's Bay was worth seeing. If the compilers of that celebrated "Abstract" had confined themselves to stating that at a particular part of the coast there existed a remarkable and beautiful bay—that it was only accessible by water—that the rock which enclosed it was marked with diagonal stripes of black and white, alternating with the most extraordinary regularity, the white stripes being formed of chalk, and the black of flint—that the whole cliff thus curiously marked overhung the sea like an enormous alcove, so that when you got underneath it and looked up, your first impulse was to entreat your boatmen to row you out of the dangerous place with all possible speed—if the card had simply contained a statement of this sort, with nothing about parlours or kitchens, no allusions to Frenchmen's holes or ladies sitting in cliffs, then, indeed, the lover of the marvellous would have had nothing to complain of, and this protest against the delusive hopes held out by the Freshwater "Abstract" would never have been written.

As we paddled round by the Needles—of which I say nothing, because everybody knows, from photographs and other sources, all about them, and how elaborately unlike needles they are—as we rowed round to Alum Bay, where I was to land, I had leisure, being now in smooth water, to reflect on one especial characteristic which was exhibited, in a very marked degree, by both my boatmen. They both seemed bent upon convincing me, now that it was too late for repentance, that I had chosen the wrong season of the year, and the wrong kind of day, for making acquaintance with the "beauties

and curiosities" which we had just been examining. They made me aware of how much I had lost, chiefly by means of the talk which they held one with another as we rowed through the smooth waters of Alum Bay.

"Ah, Benjamin," remarked Robinson, the stroke, looking over his shoulder at his companion as he spoke, "the gen'lman's been unlucky. If we'd ha' had a smoother day, we might ha' rowed in at them caves of Neptune, as we've done afore now," with a glance in my direction—"rowed in at the great cave, and come out of the small one; but it's the wrong sort of day."

"Ah," replied the individual thus addressed, "you're about in the rights of it there. Wrong sort of day, and wrong time of year. Why, if the gen'lman had been here a little earlier, say the end of May or the beginning of June, he'd ha' seen that bit of rock at the Main Bench all alive with birds—cormorants and puffins, and all the rest of 'em, lat alone the samphire-gatherers hanging all over the cliffs by their ropes, and that's worth seeing, that is."

ENGRAVED ON STEEL.

BUNGLEBUTT, the great Bunglebutt, member of parliament for the flourishing town of Lower Pighurst, has come out decidedly strong this time! Bunglebutt, at any time, is an awfully knowing blade; a regular Adam Smith over the nation's wealth collectively, and over his own wealth individually.

Bunglebutt—who has been returned by a majority of nine hundred and ninety-nine of the most enlightened of Lower Pighurst, to serve in the imperial parliament—is admitted, on all hands, to be up to a thing or two; his grasp over the mysteries of political economy is so tremendous, and his appetite for statistics is so alarming, that ever since he came out with his exhaustive pamphlet, "What will Britannia do when her last shovel of coals has been put on the fire?" not only the Lower Pighurstians to a man, woman, and child, but the political economists and the most cunning staticians in all parts of the kingdom have combined to consider the great Bunglebutt as a match for any two chancellors of the exchequer, one down and the other come on. Yet, all this is nothing to what the great Bunglebutt has since done on the momentous coal question. Bunglebutt is, himself, a great manufacturer, and consumes no end of tons of coals every week. Our daily increasing consumption of coals so rankles in his heart that he sees the day when it will be all up with England and her coals, together. To avert this stupendous calamity, the mighty mind of the far-seeing Bunglebutt has been hard at work, both in and out of parliament, until the interesting result has been the production of his truly stunning work, "Our empty Coal-cellars, and What's to fill them?"

Only think! A book on the great coal question consisting of one thousand and one closely printed pages, filled from beginning to end with

a never-ending variety of statistical tables, from which even the most hungry statician can appease his appetite to his heart's content!

Only think! Twenty-one editions—one thousand each—of "Our empty Coal-cellars, and What's to fill them?" devoured in the short space of twenty-one days, by twenty-one thousand admiring political economists and stunned staticians, each and every one of whom talked himself clean out of breath to twenty-one more almost driven-mad political economists and stunned staticians who had not been fortunate enough to make a purchase of "Our empty Coal-cellars, and What's to fill them?"

Nevertheless, twenty-one editions, of one thousand copies each, demolished in twenty-one days, is not half enough to satisfy the craving of the public upon this home-touching topic. All heads (especially the thickest and hardest) are filled with Bunglebutt. The fame of Bunglebutt resounds everywhere—morning, noon, and night. Every twenty-four hours the name of Bunglebutt turns up in every column of every morning and evening newspaper, no matter what may be its price or its political colour. Then who can wonder that the twenty-second and much-augmented edition of "Our empty Coal-cellars, and What's to fill them?" has gone to press?

But at the last moment, when the panting public are almost at the point of frenzy for this twenty-second and much-augmented edition, the splendid idea strikes somebody that it should be adorned with a portrait of the great Bunglebutt, "beautifully engraved upon steel, in the highest style of art."

Jolterhead, the eminent photographic artist of Lower Pighurst, who has accomplished no end of cartes de visite of the mighty Bunglebutt in every possible pose—sometimes with his left foot thrown over his right foot, with his hat in his right hand, and sometimes with his left hand upon his left hip, and his hat upon the table, against which he rests gracefully—has just accomplished a great triumph, in the shape of a large portrait of Bunglebutt. Hence the splendid idea of somebody—perhaps the immortal Bunglebutt himself—that "Our empty Coal-cellars, and What's to fill them?" should hereafter be delivered to the panting public embellished with this photographic portrait of the great Bunglebutt, "beautifully engraved upon steel, in the highest style of art."

The dreadful consequence of this "at the last moment" determination is, that Pickpeck, the engraver, is sent for, and is commandingly requested to engrave upon steel the portrait of Bunglebutt in the "highest style of art," from a muzzy and black-as-your-hat photograph, as quick as "a flash of lightning." There is no help for it; the public are panting for the twenty-second and much-augmented edition of "Our empty Coal-cellars, and What's to fill them?" The book is ready to go to the binder. It is, therefore, Pickpeck, the stipple engraver, the dawdling Pickpeck, who alone keeps, as it were, the cellar-door of publication shut up, and simply because he cannot engrave, "in the

highest style of art," the portrait of Bumblebutt as quick as "a flash of lightning."

However, whether the great Bumblebutt is "beautifully engraved in the highest style of art" or not, the art and mystery of engraving a portrait upon steel is not to be accelerated beyond "putting on the screw," in the shape of working night and day; this poor Pickpeck does, but engraving even a book-portrait upon steel is a work of time for all that; besides which, Bumblebutt is the proud possessor of a peculiar obliquity of vision in one eye, and that simple, if not beautifying, circumstance will bring much wailing and woe upon Pickpeck, the engraver, before Bumblebutt is done with.

It happens to be half-past one P.M. on Monday, when Pickpeck has undertaken the "flash of lightning" impossibility. The muzzy and black-as-your-hat photograph has been delivered to him; the size of the steel plate has been settled upon; and so, to save time, although it is two miles out of his way yet on his way home, Pickpeck posts along to the steel-plate maker, to order his plate; but somebody has ordered half a dozen "flash of lightning" plates five minutes before the arrival of Pickpeck, so Pickpeck is content to accept the promise that he shall have his "flash of lightning" plate last thing on Wednesday night, or first thing on Thursday morning. Here's delay—what is to become of "Our empty Coal-cellars, and What's to fill them?" What is to become of the panting public? Down with Pickpeck!

Pickpeck returns to his home to prepare for action. The first serious thing to be accomplished is, to carefully trace the outline of the portrait. Pickpeck selects a fine clear piece of gelatine, or glass paper, fastening it down over the portrait, which, being a photograph, does not show as perfectly through the glass paper as Pickpeck could desire; nevertheless, with the aid of a magnifying-glass and his properly sharpened etching-needle, Pickpeck manages to trace, that is to say, slightly to scratch or cut, on the upper surface of the glass paper, the outline of Bumblebutt's majestic countenance, as it shows itself through the transparent sheet of glass paper.

At length the steel plate arrives; whereupon Pickpeck well washes with turpentine the polished side thereof, besides further polishing that same side by friction with whiting; then he prepares to lay an etching-ground. Having firmly fastened a hand vice to one end of the steel plate, by which it may be held out at arm's length, then, with sundry pieces of paper crumpled up, and placed all alight in a fire-shovel, Pickpeck proceeds to warm the steel plate through, from the underneath side, against which he is slowly moving the flame arising from the ignited print paper; the heat being adjusted to that degree which, in his long experience, Pickpeck conceives to be sufficient to cause the etching-ground to melt and flow freely.

The mysterious compound called etching-ground—carefully tied up in a piece of silk—is a small globe, not unlike, in size and colour, a rather corpulent brandy-ball: a sweetstuff known to most of us in our childhood.

The steel plate being sufficiently heated, Pickpeck passes his silk-covered ball of etching ground up and down the polished side of the steel plate: the warmth contained in it causing the etching-ground to flow out freely through the pores of the silk covering; thus leaving across the front of the steel plate what look like so many streaks of treacle. Pickpeck then takes up his dabber, also made of silk, stuffed with wadding, and to which a holder is attached; the entire dabber resembling most completely a two and a half-inch inverted mushroom. With this inverted mushroom-looking dabber, Pickpeck dabs up and down, and backwards and forwards, over the treacle-like streaks of etching-ground, until the latter have become beautifully manipulated into one harmonious and level tint, very much, in appearance as to colour, like the top of a hot-cross-bun. One more operation, and the etching-ground will be complete. Lighting a wax taper—which, to yield a good body of flame, has been doubled up into lengths so as to make a cable of eight wicks, the whole gently twisted together, and presenting the appearance of a peppermint-stick, only not quite so white to look at—Pickpeck makes of the steel plate, by holding it at arm's length aloft, a temporary ceiling above his head, but with the etching-ground-covered side of the steel plate turned downwards. Beneath this extemporised ceiling, Pickpeck flickers the lighted wax taper of eight wicks to and fro, so that the smoke arising from the wax-taper flame ascending to the steel-plate ceiling, that smoke sinks into and amalgamates itself with the etching-ground, which is still meltingly hot; the consequence of this last performance is, when the steel plate becomes cold, that the mixture of wax-taper smoke and melted etching-ground has produced a polished lacquer-like coating on the steel plate, causing it to resemble a well-japanned piece of black tea-tray.

The steel plate being quite cold, and the etching-ground perfect enough to satisfy Pickpeck—who is very fastidious in all these operations—he prepares to "turn off the tracing." Putting the glass paper, upon which the countenance of the wise Bumblebutt has been cut, or scratched, or traced, over a piece of white paper, but with the tracing uppermost, Pickpeck proceeds to sprinkle a little lead-pencil dust on it, and then, with a small piece of cotton rag, sweeps, or brushes, as much of the lead-pencil dust into the traced lines as they will hold. He soon ascertains when each line is well filled, by their suddenly appearing black, owing to the white paper underneath the transparent sheet of gelatine, or glass paper.

And now to effect the transfer of the tracing on to the etching-ground. The glass paper, on which is the "counterfeit presentment" of the tremendous Bumblebutt, is laid with the traced side downwards upon the etching-ground itself, and, when it is fastened in position, Pickpeck, with one of his choicest burnishers, proceeds to burnish over the upper or non-traced-upon side of the glass paper. The pleasing result of this operation is, that, as the burnisher passes

along, it presses the lead-pencil dust out of the lines of the tracing on to the etching-ground, and all so perfectly, that, upon the removal of the glass paper, the eye of Pickpeck beholds every line of the tracing shining like threads of silver upon the black japanned-looking etching-ground.

Now the valorous Pickpeck can commence his etching; that is to say, he, with his etching-graver, begins to perforate the etching-ground with divers and innumerable dots, dug down into the steel, along the transferred lines of silvery pencil-dust, representing in outline the figure-head of the profound Bunglebutt. Pickpeck arranges his dots accordingly along the lines aforesaid, just as his judgment conceives they will best carry out, in an artistic manner, this much-desired representation. The etching completed, the bright dots dug into the steel—bright because surrounded and relieved by the black etching-ground—now blaze away until the etching seems to represent a kind of starry firmament turned upside down, and composed of countless illumination-lamps on a small scale.

The etching completed, Pickpeck has nothing to do but to prepare himself, and the steel plate, for the "biting-in;" a process whereby a certain acid, called nitric, antagonistic to steel in all its notions, will do, in a few minutes, what even an engraver could not accomplish so well, were he to labour no end of days. But, before biting-in, the steel plate must be "walled," and then "stopped out."

For the purpose of walling the plate Pickpeck gets a small pan of lukewarm water, into which he puts the wall-wax, or bordering-wax, as it is variously called; the same being a compound of common pitch and beeswax, in equal proportions. When this wall-wax is sufficiently softened by the warmth of the water, Pickpeck, upon his table, rolls it out, until it looks like an extra-long piece of stick-liquorice, but not quite so big in its circumference; then with the thumb and the first finger of both hands he presses the round stick of wall-wax to a flat, about the eighth of an inch in thickness by one inch in breadth. The next thing to be done is to place this flat strip of wall-wax on its side edge, round the entire etching; where it somewhat resembles a little great wall of China, made of hardbake, but without the almonds. The edge of the wall-wax resting on the steel plate, being securely pressed down, so as to cause it to adhere firmly to the plate, and not allow the acid to escape beneath the wall, the remainder of the plate—between the wall and the etching—although it is already covered with the etching-ground, is nevertheless now covered over with a coating of Brunswick black, fresh from the bottle, and laid on with a camel-hair brush; the Brunswick black being carried round the base of this little great wall of China, with every possible care, the more effectually by such attentive stopping-out, to keep the acid within bounds, and thereby prevent "foul biting"—a kind of accident most repugnant to the soul of Pickpeck. On the left side of the steel plate, while erecting the wall, and while the wax is

still warm and pliable, Pickpeck, by a dexterous action of his fingers, presses out a spout to allow of the acid being poured off the plate with increased facility.

At length the stopping-out being perfectly dry, with a small-spouted jug half full of malignant-smelling acid grasped in his left hand, Pickpeck looks one moment down upon the bright shining dots of his etching; the next moment the deed is done; the acid is poured on to the etching—confined within the limits of the little great wall of China. The etching-ground and the Brunswick black being both impervious to all acidical attacks, the acid has nothing to do but to tumble headforemost into the dots, dug through the etching-ground into the steel below. The acid no sooner tumbles into the dots, than they almost immediately lose their brightness: just as though the acid, being so pugnaciously inclined towards steel, had suddenly given every individual bright dot a black eye. Anyhow, the acid is fighting for its life in these dug-out dot holes; the acid is tearing off minute particles of steel, and throwing them up out of the dot holes in such multitudes as to cause a brownish cloud to be seen floating about the little lake, the pungent odour from which has already begun to tickle the nose of Pickpeck. But the time has now come for Pickpeck to interfere. Swiftly he pours off the acid from within the little great wall of China, rapidly supplying the place of the acid with pure water; which operation he repeats again and again, so as to wash thoroughly the dots that have been so much labourled by the violent conduct of the acid. Upon pouring off the water and drying up the few bubbles that have remained fondly hanging about the etching, Pickpeck comes to the conclusion, on a close examination, that the biting is sufficient. Removing, therefore, the wall, and washing off the etching-ground and the Brunswick black with turpentine, the steel plate once again appears silvery white: while the dots, owing to the vigorous performance of the acid, appear jet black; whereby the mighty Bunglebutt looks up at Pickpeck in brilliant outline.

All things, such as acid, Brunswick black, wall-wax, and other "biting traps" being carefully put away, Pickpeck sits down to begin engraving in earnest. First, then, he proceeds—by digging the point of his stipple-graver down into the steel plate, and thence chipping out a minute particle of that metal—to lay a tint of tiny dots all over the expressive face of Bunglebutt; sometimes placing the dots close together, thereby to render the finer markings of the features; sometimes placing the dots wider apart, as various muscles swell out and give the varied rotundities of Bunglebutt's countenance. When one tint of dots has been laid down all over the great man's face, Pickpeck, by means of a powerful magnifying-glass, is enabled to place a second dot close to the side of the first dot—Siamese-twins fashion; thus he proceeds upon his way, putting a dot here, and a dot there, and a dot wherever his artistic judgment tells him a dot should be

placed. Such is the art and mystery of stipple-engraving upon steel; and so Pickpeck goes on dotting from day to day, until he has wrought out, by means of these multitudinous dots, a fair representation of the "form and pressure" of a Bunglebutt "in his habit as he lives."

But, say what you will, engraving upon steel is a very slow process; therefore Pickpeck has no help for it but to go on dot, dot, dotting, with his greatest vigour; first oppressed by the heat of the sun during the day; then, baked almost beyond endurance by the heat from his oil lamp at night. And thus, although the head of Bunglebutt; as it is being engraved, is no bigger than a bronze penny-piece, Pickpeck has to dot, dot, dot, his countless dots day after day, besides suffering from all the ills which an engraver's flesh is heir to. These are ills that come in the shape of indifferent gravers; one graver is too hard, and away flies its point as soon as it touches the steel plate, making, instead of a dot beautiful in shape and clearness, an ill-formed dent, probably twice as big as was required for the purpose. Sometimes the result of this sudden snapping of the point of the graver is a slip, which brings with it loss of time—first to erase the slip, and then to make good the surface of the steel plate. The next graver, and the next after that, will be, in all probability, too soft, and here is more trouble for Pickpeck; nearly half his time is lost in re-sharpening his gravers, for the moment some of them touch the steel plate, their points get doubled up. Thus, Pickpeck frets and fumes, and fumes and frets, and carries on his work "through difficulties of which it is useless to complain," as Johnson observed concerning the labour of his Dictionary. Yes; all this Pickpeck has to do, to an extent which makes him feel with bitter force the further words of the great lexicographer; for the engraver dots away, day after day, "without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour" from anybody.

But after all this work and labour, after all this dot, dot, dotting, to get out the true light and shade of Bunglebutt's sage countenance—upon taking a proof at this middle stage of the engraving, the proof looks rather white and ghostly; consequently, increase of power must be had quickly, and can be had quickly by what is called re-biting; therefore, Pickpeck prepares for the more than usually delicate operation of "a re-bite."

For laying his re-biting ground, Pickpeck does not use the ground he employed for etching upon, although that would serve the purpose very well; but Pickpeck is a particular fellow in these matters, and has, therefore, his special corpulent-looking brandy-ball-coloured ground for re-biting; yet the materials composing these grounds are the same in both cases—that is to say, virgin wax, Burgundy pitch, and asphaltum; but it is by the most subtle cunning that the proportions have been varied, so as to make each ground the more efficacious for its particular department.

In this operation of re-biting, the first thing that Pickpeck has to do, is, beautifully to clean

the engraved surface of the steel plate with turpentine; then, placing a lady's silver thimble full of whitening upon the well-cleaned surface, with a little fresh turpentine added, wherewith to make the whitening into a kind of paste, the same is then laid completely over the plate, and, when quite dry, the superfluous whitening being brushed off with a clean piece of cotton rag, the surface of the steel plate will suddenly appear as bright as polished silver, while every individual engraved dot and line looks somewhat pretty, being perfectly filled with dry and hard whitening. But this must be removed before the ground can be laid; so, with a piece of carefully selected stale bread, quite free from the least speck of grease, Pickpeck gently rubs the stale bread over the engraved parts: when forthwith the whitening leaves the dots and lines, which are then observed to sparkle like diamonds of the purest water.

The steel plate being thus prepared for a re-biting ground, and at the back or under side of the plate the proper amount of warmth having been applied, the first important thing for Pickpeck to do is to pass down the margin of the plate the silk-covered ball of re-biting ground, which, as if by magic, leaves in the wake of its passage what looks like a stroke of treacle. This is then gently manipulated about the margin of the plate by means of a series of delicate pats or dabs with the re-biting dabber, until the ground is diffused about and thinned down into a homogeneous tint, like a layer of leaf-gold. Now comes the trial of skill; from this leaf-gold looking tint of re-biting ground, lying on the margin of the plate, Pickpeck begins to pass with his dabber over the engraved surface with the gentlest of all gentle pats, and, as his manipulation is this time perfect, the satisfactory result is, that over Bunglebutt's expressive head and shoulders there presently appears a golden film of re-biting ground, the same resting upon the blank bits of steel situated between and around each line and dot that has been engraved upon the steel plate; moreover, every dot is shining away through the golden film of re-biting ground, like so many homoeopathic spangles; for if the smallest particle of the re-biting ground had flowed over the sides of any line or dot, and so down into these graver-made cavities, the acid would very politely decline to act therein.

The next thing to be done is for Pickpeck to carefully cover over with his Brunswick black all such parts of the engraving as he does not desire to re-bite. Then, once again, Pickpeck surrounds the steel plate with a second little great wall of China, composed of the same kind of wax that the first was made with. The Brunswick black being carried home to the base of this little great wall of China, the process of stopping-out the plate for re-biting is complete, while the Brunswick black will in a comparatively short time be dry enough and hard enough to decline letting the acid make way through its coat, so as to do damage to the surface of the steel beneath.

Pickpeck prepares to pour his re-biting acid on the plate and within the mystic circle of wall-

wax. As before observed, the engraved portion of the plate, not stopped out with Brunswick black, is only covered with a delicate gold-leaf-looking film of re-biting ground, which, thin and delicate as it is, being nevertheless perfectly laid, scorns the most desperate attack of the acid; consequently the acid aforesaid is no sooner poured upon the plate than it pops down into the dots, taking their shine off in no time. As in the case of the etching, so with the engraving, minute particles of metal are torn away, whence every dot is being enlarged by this violent mode of proceeding on the part of the acid. And very sharp and attentive work is this re-biting, for all that Pickpeck wishes to accomplish, though of such great importance, is nevertheless—on steel—almost of a momentary nature in its working. An instant too long—nay, the winking of Pickpeck's eyelids—and the work of days may be undone in half a second. But fate is this time kind to Pickpeck; his re-biting is a success. Nay, more, though Pickpeck, in his anxiety to see a proof, starts off himself to the steel and copper-plate printer at full speed in the broiling sun, as though he were walking for a heavy wager, his proofs are beautiful, for all the nice operations of the skilful "prover" are successful. Pickpeck would, notwithstanding his toils, begin to feel a little happy, were it not for that obliquity of vision on the part of Bunglebutt; which circumstance fills the heart of the engraver with misgivings. But still he works on manfully, toning here, burnishing a little there, and attending to all the refinements of drawing in every part of Bunglebutt's face, until he is enabled to submit what is, as he flatters himself, a very satisfactory finished proof. This, however, does not end the woes of Pickpeck. The sons and daughters of Bunglebutt—to say nothing of the wife of Bunglebutt's bosom—all make their remarks upon the engraving. These remarks are highly complimentary to Bunglebutt, and, as a natural consequence, very uncomplimentary to the engraver. The prodigious Bunglebutt himself writes a letter of remarks. This letter fills four pages of the largest cream-laid note-paper. The writing is very small and very close, and the remarks are directed at the inartistic manner in which Pickpeck has rendered the expression of "the left-hand eye."

To speak in plain and honest English, Pickpeck believes that the obliquity of Bunglebutt's left eye is a positive squint—an uncompromising squint; and that he has rendered its expression perfectly, even to its most subtle refinements of drawing. However, the Bunglebutt family perceive in "the left-hand eye" of their great papa—the real live eye—only "a stern expression of deep meditation, combined with a profundity of philosophical thought." Upon that, Bunglebutt criticises, in three pages of closely written note-paper of the largest size, the refinement of expression to be observed in what he calls "the left-hand eye;" all of which intellectual expression, in the united opinion of the Bunglebutt family, he, Pickpeck, has entirely missed. After this, nothing is left for Pickpeck but to throw, as well as he can, his whole soul into the soul of

Bunglebutt, and to do his best to coax and coquet with that same left-hand eye, engraving divers dots, first a little on this side, then a little on that side, then a trifle above, then a trifle below: with a few very refined dots placed in the very apple of "the left-hand eye" itself. After doing all this, there are more journeys to the steel and copper-plate printer, and more finished proofs to be submitted, to be followed by more criticism; for the Bunglebutt family think a great deal of the "profundity of philosophical thought" which they perceive in that parental "left-hand eye," a most evil eye to Pickpeck. But all this monstrous long time the panting public are clamouring with frenzy for the twenty-second and much-augmented edition of "Our empty Coal-cellers, and What's to fill them?" embellished with the portrait of the author, which was to have been engraved "like a flash of lightning," but is not done yet.

Consequently a finished proof has to be submitted for a third time, and has to be a third time criticised; this necessitates a fourth finished proof, which, although the Bunglebutt family still think the engraver has not quite entered into all the depths of expression to be observed in "the left-hand eye," is happily accepted by them: while, taken altogether, they admit the engraving to be a very nice engraving, which will doubtless be received by the panting public as a decided adornment to "Our empty Coal-cellers, and What's to fill them?"

A MERE SCRATCH.

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VI.

THE worthy butler had been right; but not sufficiently right. Miss Vann's faintishness had deepened into a swoon, and her aunt's chamber, to which she had been carried, was a scene of some anxiety. As she regained consciousness, however, Mrs. Turnover gradually cleared the apartment of all extraneous company, and the consequence was that Esther's first accents, on recovering her faculties, were heard by her aunt alone. Scarcely had the bright eyes reopened, when they were filled with a wild alarm.

"Is—is he—aunt, tell me—is he *safe*?" she gasped.

"Yes—yes, dear—safe enough," Mrs. Turnover hastened to reply. "Keep quiet, I hear Mr. Fanshaw—" She went to the door and called softly. Mr. Fanshaw's voice was heard in faint response. "Is master bit? That brute's fangs ain't touched him at all, *have* they?"

To this leading question Mr. Fanshaw was fortunately able to reply in good faith:

"No, Mrs. Turnover. Make yourself quite heasy, ma'am. They have *not*."

Esther's ears had caught the welcome word.

"God be praised!" she uttered, fervently; then, once more turning deadly white, sank back upon the pillow.

Mrs. Turnover administered new restoratives, and soon saw the colour returning.

"Well, you *are* a one, I must say," the good lady could not help remarking. "So bold

when there was danger, and such a coward, now there's none! But, there now, never mind, lie you still for half an hour—and—then— Mercy, girl, what's *this*?" added Mrs. Turnover, turning almost as pale as her patient had done a minute before.

"*That*?" cried Esther, laughing. "My dear aunt, nothing. A mere scratch."

"Not from the dog?"

"Dog! No—no—no, dear. Calm yourself," said Esther, hastily. "I was plucking a rose, Sir George addressed me suddenly, and I got a scratch—that's all."

"Lor, what a turn it giv' me!" said her aunt, sitting down on the bed, with her hand on her portly side. "No wonder, for there's all the mark of the beast's foam close to it, on your wristband. I shall take and snip it off."

She did so, and also washed and bound up the passive hand, to all of which Esther submitted placidly.

"And now," said Mrs. Turnover, "I must go and titivate myself a bit. I 'spects somebody else will be a-wantin' of me." (I wonder if Faushaw's giv' the letter!) "Now, you lay quiet as a mouse for half an hour. I shall putt myself to rights in Dolly's room, so's not to worrit you, a-hobbing about. Get a sleep if you can, if 'tis only a wink."

Not even the relief obtainable from a nap of this duration was yet vouchsafed to Esther. She did, indeed, close her eyes, until her aunt, after a minute's rummage among the treasures of her wardrobe, trotted off to an adjoining room, and closed the door. Then, however, she rose from the bed, and, kneeling beside it, poured out her soul in gratitude to the great Defender, who had, through her feeble hand, turned aside so great a peril. Then, in the reaction that succeeds intense excitement, sleep deigned to visit her.

A few minutes had elapsed, when the door of the apartment to which Mrs. Turnover had retired, opened softly, and displayed that lady listening, and lacing her stays. Finding all quiet, she advanced a step or two in the direction of Esther's room, and this enables us to record the fact that the good lady usually wore, under her dress, an uncertain-coloured petticoat, which might be described as pepper-and-salt, with a dash of mustard, and whose brevity authorises the addition that she regarded black cotton stockings, with grey worsted tops, as becoming and economical wear.

What article of dress the lady had forgotten to take from her drawer, is not material to this narrative. She deemed it essential, since, with great care and pains, she made her way noiselessly into the chamber, and was stretching out her hand to the half-opened drawer, when a murmur from the sleeper's lips caught her ear. She stopped. Again the murmur. It sounded, this time, like somebody's name.

"Eh!—*What*—at?" said Mrs. Turnover, softly. "*What's* that?"

She had advanced just beyond the curtain of Esther's couch, and, by merely revolving on the stately pedestals we have already referred to as clothed in black and grey, without moving

from her place, could distinguish Esther's face. The cheek was flushed, and, even in sleep, a tear was upon it, while her lips moved in feverish action. For a moment, her words were inaudible, then shaped themselves into:

"Safe!—Safe!—My life!—My more than life!—George!" She breathed a profound sigh, and sank into quiet rest.

"Well—I—never!" were the first words the listener's quivering lips attempted to frame.

After a moment, Mrs. Turnover appeared to rally her disordered thoughts. She faced the bed. As she gazed on the pretty sleeper, a tear crept into her eye, and if something in the facial angle *did* direct it down the nose instead of the cheeks, there was no less honour due to the generous source from whence it came.

Then she glanced at the half-open drawer, and the reflection: "How lucky 'twas I come back for my bustle! How things do bob up unexpectedly!" passed through her mind.

With that, the kind soul turned, and observing, if possible, double caution, stole back to the chamber she had left. Good woman! If Turnover could see you now, that often-quoted man must have acknowledged his confidence in your frank and single-hearted nature not misplaced, and that the most complimentary of all his last speeches did not exceed your desert.

That Mrs. Turnover did not experience a pang of disappointment, is not pretended. The credit claimed for her is mainly due to the readiness with which she confessed to herself that, whatever might be the issue of Esther's attachment, the fact of its existence was an absolute and insuperable bar to her own pretensions.

"Pretty, sweet creetur!" said Mrs. Turnover, as she finished her lacing before the glass, and saw (but she was not apostrophising *that*) a large coarse torso in the aforesaid dirt-coloured petticoat, and a square head with short grizzled hair. "Lord bless my soul! what an old gaby I had nearly gone and been! Cunning little 'ussy that you be! You'd never ha' told me—not *you*! And think of all that pudence of anger last night, and wouldn't even stoop—my lady wouldn't—to open the door for him! And she'd on'y seen his pictur', a'ter all! Well, love's a queer thing! There goes the cussed string!" Lace renewed, and Mrs. Turnover continued: "'George,' she called him! Well, people *is* bold, asleep!"

The good lady hastily completed her toilette, resuming her original or working garments, and, after one peep at the still slumbering Esther, hurried down stairs in search of Mr. Faushaw.

That gentleman's movements, since we last saw him, had been characterised by considerable indecision. The important letter had been confided to him, with instructions to use his own discretion in the mode of delivery. But for this mysterious addition, the worthy man would, no doubt, have adopted the common-sense course of placing it beside his master's other letters on the breakfast-table. As, however, this proceeding seemed to demand no particular exercise of discretion or delicacy of touch, Mr. Faushaw at once rejected it, as a non-fulfilment

of his mission, and, wandering about with the document in his hand, speculated within himself how on earth Cupid's postmen usually executed their office.

During his hesitation the letter-bag arrived, uncommonly full. A moment afterwards, the footman entered with some breakfast articles.

"Master's coming down, Mr. Fanshaw."

"Is he? Anchovy toast. Run, Thomas—quick!" said the butler, hurriedly. His eye had rested on the silver muffin-dish, and an idea, bright as its own beaming cover, occurred to him. He lifted it, hesitated—would it grease? Sir George's step approached. In his flurry, Mr. Fanshaw dropped the note on the muffin. There was no time to recover it; he replaced the cover.

The baronet entered, glanced hastily over the ranks of letters, looked relieved, and sat down to breakfast. At this instant, Mr. Fanshaw, standing opposite, caught sight of the portly figure of Mrs. Turnover, executing, outside the half-open door, a series of wild and agitated movements, the object of which he could only interpret as either a request to know if he had yet presented the letter, or an injunction to do it, if he had *not*. So earnest grew the pantomime, that Mr. Fanshaw made a movement to withdraw, and join her.

"Stay a moment, Fanshaw," said his master, who had opened a letter.

Unable to explain further, the butler gave Mrs. Turnover a reassuring smile, and significantly pushed the muffin-dish an inch or so nearer to his master. Finding this had not the tranquillising effect he expected, Mr. Fanshaw, observing that Sir George was still absorbed in his letter, ventured to raise the lid, just sufficiently to afford the anxious lady an opportunity of noticing the promising aspect of affairs, while at the same time he directed a triumphant glance through the door. In acknowledgment, Mrs. Turnover threw up her arms in some species of ecstasy, flung her apron over her head, and staggered away. Mr. Fanshaw stared after her in some perplexity.

"Now, that didn't sim like j'y," was his reflection. He began to wish he could regain the letter.

"Fanshaw!"

"Yes, Sir George."

"Fanshaw! Oh, you will present my compliments to Miss Vann, and beg her, when she has fully recovered, to afford me an opportunity of expressing my acknowledgments of the great service she has this day rendered to me, and, indeed, to all my household."

"Yes, Sir George."

"Stay, give me a muffin."

"Muffin, Sir George?"

"Muffin."

At that supreme moment the butler was conscious of the reappearance of Mrs. Turnover, now in an unmistakable attitude of despair, while Dolly, equally agitated, peeped over her shoulder. It was, however, too late. Mr. Fanshaw had placed the fatal dish within reach, and was preparing to beat a precipitate retreat.

"Take off the cover," said George.

Mr. Fanshaw obeyed. One glance revealed the fact that the steam-saturated letter had begun to imbibe the rich fluid below, and, having once tasted thereof, was rapidly becoming inebriated.

"Why, what in the name of—" began George, lifting it curiously with his fork. "Here, take this away! Something has got into it."

"Bless me, so there be!" cried the butler, as he whipped off the dish, muttering something about "the baker."

"Lor! What a providence!" gasped Mrs. Turnover, as Mr. Fanshaw presented her with the recovered treasure, dish and all. Snatching off the letter, the good woman hurried away.

For some time after he had finished both his letters and his breakfast, the young baronet remained at the table, immersed in thought. With an effort, he rose and went into his study. There he took two or three restless turns, then rang the bell, and flung himself into a chair.

"Now for my fate," he muttered.

A servant appeared.

"Desire the coo—" George checked himself. "Say to Mrs. Turnover that I shall be glad to see her for a minute."

"Mrs. Turnover's awaitin', Sir George," was the prompt reply.

"Beg her to come in."

Mrs. Turnover, quietly attired, came in. Though on a large scale, and of that general aspect which a fastidious critic might have described in the not uncommon expression "vulgar," the worthy cook was, for her style, a personable woman. It may further be that the consciousness of a generous purpose had imparted to her countenance and manner a degree of softness and dignity not usually to be found there. At all events, her young master thought he had never seen her look so comely since the days when, as a schoolboy, he had not disdained to receive surreptitious dainties at that large and liberal hand.

"Sit down, I beg," said Sir George.

Mrs. Turnover bobbed a curtsy, and remained standing.

"Sit, sit, my good friend," said Sir George, a little impatiently.

"Beggin' your pardon, Sir George," was the reply, "I prefer standin'."

Sir George rose.

Mrs. Turnover cleared her throat, twitched her apron nervously, and began:

"I was wishful, Sir George, to give hanser, so quick as I could, to what you was a-saying of, last night. I've been considerin' of it, as you hordered, Sir George, and, with my respectful dooty and thanks, I shall be most 'appy"—George's heart stood still—"for to remain your cook; but as to being your wife, I'd rayther, when I doos marry, keep to my home spear."

"Of your feelings on such a point, my good Barbara, you must, of course, be the best judge," said the much relieved suitor; "but do not decide hastily."

"Tis settled, Sir George; and I'm very glad to see you take it so kindly, sir. I was

afraid, seeing how earnest you was, that you might be disappointed," said the honest cook.

George took the good woman's hand, and was hypocrite enough to allow a shade of tranquil resignation to be perceptible in his countenance as he replied, with a melancholy smile, that it was not his first disappointment, and he should overcome it as he might; adding, after a decent pause, that he should dine at home that day, and expected two friends.

Mrs. Turnover curtsied, and prepared to withdraw; but, pausing a moment, remarked:

"Hevery day I lives, I has occasion to bless them last words as hever hissed from the lips of T."

"Tea?" said George, absently.

"The same was as follers," resumed Mrs. Turnover. "He was total unconscious. Indeed, we thought he were gone, when, suddenly, he opens one eye, and winks twice; which meaning 'stimulants,' they was giv', and he says, faintly: 'Fishes don't enjy bilin' water.' Thinking he was a wanderin', we nodded cheerful-like; but he goes on: 'A dillykid female 'oodn't live long at the bottom of the Hartic Sea.' After that, we thought he *was* going; but, with a great heffort, poor dear, he just manages to hadd: 'Theer's social differences. While there is, stick to 'em. When there ain't, don't let 'em stick to *you*. Adoo!'"

"Your excellent husband seems to have reserved many results of his experience to a very late moment!" remarked George. "At this precise moment, my mind is, I fear, too fully occupied with selfish thoughts to appreciate them properly. I have this morning escaped an imminent peril" (more than *one*, his thought suggested), "and I am impatient till I have thanked my deliverer. Is your niece sufficiently recovered to afford me the opportunity?"

Mrs. Turnover considered that, by this time, she was, and would hasten to see if such were the case.

"I have played the booby long enough," soliloquised the master of the mansion, left alone. "Honesty and common sense inspire me! I will tell her the whole truth, and then——"

Mrs. Turnover had a harder task than she expected. Her niece was indeed awake, and, calmed and invigorated by her unwonted siesta, looked as charming as need be. But the going down—except for the single end of going away—was not to be thought of.

At length, Mrs. Turnover lost all patience.

"Well, of all the contrary creeters I ever did see, you beats all! You wentered your life to protect him—nay, I believe," added Mrs. Turnover, darkly, "you've actually been a-dreamin' of him." Esther started. "Child, you *loves* him! *Won't* you go down-stairs?"

"If what you say were true, ma'am," Esther replied, with burning cheeks, "you, of all people, should be the last to force me into his presence."

"Highly-tightly! Who wants to force your ryal 'ighness? And why should *I* be the last to make you do what in your 'art you wishes?" demanded the cook, losing all control of her

temper. "Now, look here. If you don't go down and be thanked like a reasonable woman, I'll go to master myself, and tell him flat that you was a-making love to his pictur. *Now!*"

"Aunt, aunt! I could not have believed that you would have been so cruel—so—so—wicked," said Esther, bursting into tears.

"Cruel! Wicked!" ejaculated Mrs. Turnover, aghast. "Why, what——"

"To compel *me*, feeling as you say and believe I do, to hold any further intercourse with this gentleman, to whom, miserably for yourself and for him, you are about to be married!"

"Hoh! *That's* it? Who said we was going to be married?" said her aunt, in an altered tone.

"Have you not accepted his offer?"

"Who's gone and put *that* nonsense into your little head?" asked her aunt, with an assumption of so much innocence that Esther gazed at her in dumb surprise. "Don't you think it possible as I might like to hear what they'd say below, without raily meaning to make such a niny of myself as that comes to? P'raps I'd a fancy to tease Mrs. Mapes. But, theer, a joke's a joke, and if master had his'n, why, I've had mine."

"Oh, aunt, I am so glad!" cried Esther. "How wise! how prudent! how disinterested!"

"But, good gracious, child! you stand chatterin' here, and master's waiting! Now, Esther, I insist upon your going instant down. I'm not going to be married to him a bit, and so I've told him. Why, whatever is the matter with the girl?" continued Mrs. Turnover, flushing with anger and excitement. "You was glib enough to his pictur. As I'm a livin' 'oman, I'll tell him."

The movement she made to quit the room decided Esther.

"Stay, stay, aunt!" she exclaimed. "I will go down. It will be better—in the end."

Uttering the last words almost in soliloquy, she quitted the room.

The dialogue above recorded had allowed Sir George a little time for renewed self-examination and the arrangement of his thoughts, so that, on Miss Vann making her appearance, wearing very much the aspect of an empress whose privacy has been invaded by the exigencies of a public audience, he was prepared to meet her with a dignity equal to—and an ease greater than—her own.

Having made his purposed acknowledgments for the service she had, at such imminent personal hazard, rendered to himself and people, George respectfully bespoke her further attention for a few moments, and thereupon related, without stint or pause, the history of his engagement to Miss Mulcaster, its abrupt and hopeless termination, his own mad yielding to a wild and foolish impulse, the attempt he had nevertheless felt it incumbent on him to make, to carry it out, and its failure. In making these humiliating confessions, he trusted his patient hearer would at least give him credit for sincerity of purpose. Had Miss Vann's estimable relation accepted the overture he had been induced to make, nothing should have been wanting on his part that might reconcile her to the duties of her

new station. Her reason and foresight, however, which put his entirely to shame, had suggested a course of greater wisdom, and more likely to conduce to the happiness of both, thus leaving him, the speaker, free to—to——”

“To——?”

“To make a fitter choice.”

Miss Vann must be forgiven for observing that there did not appear to be any choice in the matter.

Sir George Gosling had indulged the hope that the course of his remarks would have indicated his having arrived at sounder views; aware of the selfishness which lay at the root of his intemperate vow, he cast it to the winds.

Miss Vann was aware that those atmospheric agents possessed a very extensive treasury of the kind, but, nevertheless, entertained doubts as to the legal transfer. That, however, was beyond her province. She would wish Sir George good morning.

Sir George considered that it could scarcely prove such to him, unless his hearer vouchsafed her attention a little longer.

But there was nothing more to say.

Her pardon. There was. Everything.

How?

Thus. He had frankly described his engagement with Miss Mulcaster, how their intimacy, began in childhood, had ripened into what he had been accustomed to regard as a mutual attachment, and how, on the very threshold of their union, one of the parties had recoiled from the bargain. The blow, thus rudely dealt, had awakened in his heart a serious doubt whether Miss Mulcaster had ever felt towards him as she permitted him to believe; while the speaker, on his part, was disposed to question whether, in his estimate of her character, he had attached sufficient importance to a certain weakness and frivolity which underlay her more attractive qualities. In one word, George must acknowledge he no longer adored the idol of his boyhood. He had tested her, and found her mortal. Dreams were over for him. Henceforth, he stooped to truth, to reason, to reality. These—and how much more he would not add—he believed he had discovered in—in her who had so patiently listened to his discourse.

It was well that George's speech came to a conclusion. Esther had turned very white, and looked so likely to faint, that he had to place her in a chair. She rallied, however, with an effort, and George, encouraged by the returning colour, and a faint smile that straggled about her lips, ventured to return to the charge.

During those appeals and explanations, to which George's historian has done but indifferent justice, the mind of his hearer had fluctuated not a little. Touched at length to the heart by his frank and earnest manner, she ended by believing every syllable. Strange and sudden as was the attachment he had formed for her, something seemed to whisper her that it was of more genuine and natural growth than that from whose ashes it had sprung; and if the exciting circumstances of the hour had led to a

somewhat premature declaration, had she a right to dispute it on that ground alone? After a moment's hesitation, breaking into a bright smile, she gave him her hand. It was the *left*.

George happened to be superstitious on this subject. He hesitated:

“A half forgiveness?” he asked, smiling. She held out the other.

“Good Heavens, what is this?” exclaimed the young man, thinking only of the dog.

“Nothing. The rose,” said Esther.

George was much relieved. He took the little hand tenderly, and kissed it.

There followed a little further conversation, with which we have no other concern than to know that it resulted in an understanding that the engagement (for such it must now be considered) should be kept secret for a period of twelve calendar months, subsequently reduced to six, and ultimately, on petition, to three, during which no communication whatever was to take place between the contracting parties. To this last condition Miss Vann held firm.

Sir George was to enjoy a period of three months for undisturbed self-examination. If, then, the impression that he now knew his own mind was sufficiently confirmed, he would use his discretion as to announcing the engagement; but any word of marriage, or allusion to that event, within one twelvemonth, was to nullify the whole transaction.

Article the last. Sir George was to order the carriage forthwith.

He did so, and led the young lady to the door, still looking wistfully at the bandaged hand.

“I fear you are suffering more than you will confess?” he said.

“I do not feel it at all,” replied Esther, with her radiant smile.

“I shall send to inquire the progress of the cure.”

“It will be your last communication, then,” said Esther. “Remember our conditions.”

“Nay, but I am really anxious——”

“Nonsense,” said Esther, laughing, “a mere scratch!”

CHAPTER VII.

It was some weeks after the momentous occurrences above related, that Mrs. Mulcaster and her fair daughters found themselves together in their pretty drawing-room, following, or attempting to follow, their accustomed avocations.

Miss Mulcaster, pale and sweet as a lily that has peeped out in the confidence of May, and been nipped by that inclement season, seemed, of the three, to have made the greatest efforts to be industrious, and to have succeeded least.

Her harp, with one string snapped (a catastrophe that brought the day's practice to a conclusion), stood on one side; some work lay on the other. Before her was an unfinished landscape, with something terrible in the sky, and, in the foreground, an incomplete traveller, who had reined up his steed in very natural consternation at the weird aspect of things. A perfect parapet of books, blue, red, mauve, yellow, evinced that the young lady had tried,

by every ordinary means, to exorcise the demon of unrest before folding her white hands and yielding fairly to the languid inactivity in which we find her.

It had been a week of much uncertainty and discontent. The mere material absence of George was an evil in itself. Nobody ever bore teasing like him. Never was a victim whose gentle retorts gave greater zest to provocation! These pleasures had departed, and left a weary void. The hours his presence had enlivened must be filled up somehow, and every attempt to do this in a satisfactory manner had ended in signal failure. As for the *cause* of his absence, that was, by consent, ignored, as a matter at once too distressing for laughter, and too absurd for tears.

Mrs. Mulcaster had proposed change of scene for her injured darling, and had even written surreptitiously to a friend, Lady Mary St. Colomb, at Ryde, on the subject of cheerful lodgings; but Mildred, on being sounded, at once announced her intention of remaining where she was, until—until—no matter—To which period the project was accordingly deferred.

Remarkable rumours had reached The Haie during the past week. That something of an unusual nature had occurred at Gosling Graize could not admit of a doubt. But what was it? The hundred tongues of rumour sometimes confound each other, and nothing comes of the Babel but a desperate rout. There was no coherence in the advices from the village with which Gosling Graize held its most intimate relations. If, for example, as alleged, Sir George had shown symptoms of aberration of intellect, how should the cook's having killed a dog in the same condition have been the means of her master's recovery? Or how should the reported betrothal of Sir George to a young lady of enormous wealth, and descent little short of royal, have proved so unacceptable to a very illustrious personage as to induce the Reverend Mr. Phlunkey to decline the publication of the banns for the ensuing Sunday? Again, why should the decease of the dog throw the cook, who killed him, into such a frenzy of despair, that nothing short of the marriage of Sir George with a Miss Van Splagen, who was a remote connexion of the burgomaster of Saardam, restore her equanimity? The cook, the dog, the lady, and Sir George, seemed, in short, to be engaged in a sort of reel, into which the butler, though without a partner, was perpetually intruding and creating the most perplexing complications.

Vague and cursory allusions had fallen from casual visitors; but those parties had invariably, like skaters approaching a spot marked "dangerous," glanced swiftly off into indifferent topics, having that forced flavour that indicates, unmistakably, how imminent had been the peril. Into these poor Mrs. Mulcaster, burning with anxiety to understand what had really happened, was compelled to follow. Come what might of Gosling Graize and its proprietor, it was not for her to express one word of interest in the matter. But she compared notes in private

with her younger daughter, and was at no pains to conceal her disquietude.

"You may smile, Louisa, and arch your brows, but mark my words. That boy, in his excitement, has done something rash—committed himself, I mean, to some folly that it may tax all the ingenuity of his friends to set aside, and may, after all, entail upon him lasting misery."

"Be quite easy, dearest mamma," replied Louisa, "and mark *my* words. In another week George will be among us on the same footing as before."

Her mother smiled at the bold prophecy, but shook her head.

"I know George Gosling," she said.

"And I Mildred Mulcaster," said Louey.

As the ladies sat together on the day we have mentioned, a visitor waited upon them, the announcement of whose name seemed to create a subdued sensation not wholly complimentary.

"Miss Shrapnell."

This lady was the last that remained unmarried of the very numerous daughters of the late Lord Boombe. The deceased nobleman had been a quiet, mild-mannered little man, shy and nervous to the last degree. His disposition was so gentle and humane that it seems like a pleasantry to state that his whole existence was passed in the invention of the most terrific agents for the destruction of the person and property of his fellow-men.

To him is society indebted for the first conception of that delicate little instrument the Seaquake shell, whose mere fillip suffices to hurl the largest line-of-battle ship that ever swam fifty fathoms out of her native element.

To Lord Boombe the world's best acknowledgments are considerably overdue for that beautiful adaptation of steam-power to military ends, which, at the distance of three miles, will effect the annihilation of an entire battalion, colonel, drummers, band, doctor, and all, in the insignificant space of one minute and a half.

Encouraged by obtaining, after a correspondence of thirty-five years, the consent of government to test the value of this last invention on the very first favourable opportunity, his lordship next turned his attention to the perfecting his balloon siege-bomb, calculated to reduce, at one discharge, the most powerful fortress in Europe, when a slight explosion in his laboratory, so trivial as to have been mistaken by the butler for the cat sneezing, shattered his nervous system, and, in fact, originated the illness from which he died.

The family mansion, Battery-Boombe, was curious in itself, as representing the old system of Vauban adapted to the residence of a small British family. It had a drawbridge, moat, and wall, with salient and re-entering angles complete, although it was almost beyond the range of possibility that any rational human being would sally or re-enter thereby. There was a laboratory and a guard-room, besides another apartment or two, the whole made bomb-proof with a covering of earth twelve feet thick, the six young ladies inhabited the casemates,

until, finding, in due course, mates of another description, they were discharged—married—like shots fired at regular intervals. The sixth and now the sole, Miss Shrapnell, formed, with her own modest establishment, the entire garri-son holding Battery-Boombe, from which she descended, grenade in hand, whenever a fitting opportunity for exploding the same with effect seemed to present itself.

Miss Shrapnell, like her excellent father, had a soft, silken manner, which went some way towards winning entrance into the good graces of all who were not forewarned of what was likely to ensue. She had a knack of possessing herself of every species of unwelcome news. She would mould and condense the same into a verbal ball, and, having first artfully created a little garden of delight, in which everybody was completely happy and at ease, bang went the shot into the very midst, and off, in the confusion, sailed Miss Shrapnell, exulting.

Mrs. Mulcaster was fully aware of this little peculiarity, and felt towards her visitor much the same regard and confidence with which James the First might have welcomed Guy Fawkes, had that gentleman escaped and presented himself at a levee.

Sweetly and softly Miss Shrapnell came melting into the room.

"Dear friends! At last. Hush—stop. Dear Miss Mulcaster, for one moment, I implore you—don't stir—don't even breathe! Heavens! what a picture!" (She drew a deep inspiration.) "Enough! Thanks. You three dear, beautiful, and happy beings," continued the enthusiastic lady. "What a gift is yours! Without uttering one syllable, without the movement of a muscle, you have been able to make a poor solitary creature happy for the day. How bright you look——"

"Louey, draw down that blind," said Mrs. Mulcaster.

"—how tranquil! how serene! Dear Mrs. Mulcaster, how sweetly this troublesome world glides onwards with its favoured few! Nature, art, destiny, seem to enter into little plots to make certain people happy. Are you not of these, dear friend? Confess, now—are you not as perfectly content as human heart can desire?"

"I—I am very content and happy—in my surroundings," said the lady addressed, suspiciously.

"Content!" moaned Miss Shrapnell. "Then, may Heaven forgive you!"

"Well, I hope so," said Mrs. Mulcaster, still on her guard. "But may I ask *why*?"

"Content! Simply content! Your glorious Mildred! Your gentle, twining Louey!"

"I am called a parasite!" said Miss Louisa, pretending to pout.

"With such blessings as these, my dear Mrs. Mulcaster," continued their visitor, in an admonitory tone, "I hold flat contentment nothing short of crime! This dear nest of yours always reminds me of—Dear me! Mildred, darling, you know everything—what's that that builds upon the sea?"

"Is it a riddle?" asked Mildred.

"No; a question."

"A duck," said Mildred, languidly.

"Nonsense, my dear; a hal—something. Well, The Haie always reminds me of the hal thing. Sunshine and smooth waters. Not one ripple. Not one cloud."

Mrs. Mulcaster became seriously alarmed. Miss Shrapnell had evidently covered the enemy, and was fingering the lanyard of her gun. If Mildred could only be got out of range, all was well.

"Mildred, sweet," she said, anxiously, "Miss Shrapnell, I am sure, will kindly excuse you. Remember your little walk."

Mildred, sweet, was, however, insensible to the danger, and, being indisposed for any little walk, retained her seat.

"Well, I, at all events, must go my way," resumed Miss Shrapnell. "Five minutes in this dear, tranquil house does more for me than an hour elsewhere. It tones and braces me. The music of the spheres (which must have been something highly gratifying) might surely find a parallel in the quiet soothing harmony that pervades this blessed mansion. Do you know, I always feel inclined to call it 'home'?"

"I am sure you could not pay it a more welcome compliment than by making it such as much as possible," said the lady addressed, preparing to bow the visitor out as promptly as politeness allowed.

"Adieu, then, my happy Three!" cried the affectionate lady, and, to Mrs. Mulcaster's equal surprise and relief, tripped harmlessly away. Still, there was a lurking gleam in her eye, like the glimmering of a portfire, and Mrs. Mulcaster could hardly bring herself to believe that Fawkes, after laying his powder with such manifest pains, would depart without applying the match.

Her misgiving was correct. The bonnet of Miss Shrapnell, like the muzzle of a gun suddenly run out, reappeared at the door. She smiled sweetly on the three:

"Heard the news?"

"No!" exclaimed Mildred.

"Sir George Gosling is engaged to his cook."

Miss Shrapnell softly closed the door, and drove away in the highest glee. Never had she delivered a calmer, more accurate, and more discomfiting shot. It was some minutes before the excellent lady could compose herself, fitly, to the preparation of another little missile, intended for a quiet family who, she had every reason to believe, had money in a country bank that had suspended payment that morning.

The explosion of an actual bomb in the drawing-room of The Haie could hardly have produced greater consternation. Mildred threw up her arms with a cry of horror. Louisa burst into tears. Mrs. Mulcaster, better prepared for the fatal tidings, thought only of their effect upon her darling—on whom she lavished every consolation her mind could suggest. But Mildred repulsed her; not harshly, however. Self-reproach was the dominant feeling. George had done only what he had threatened, and had been defied to do. The work was entirely her own.

"I am a vile, wicked, heartless woman,"

moaned Mildred. "Take away your hands, mamma. Let nobody caress me—nobody comfort me. I tell you I am all made up of self and folly. O mamma—why didn't you? *Why* didn't you?"

"My treasure, didn't I *what*?" said Mrs. Mulcaster, soothingly.

"Punish me when I was little!" retorted the spoiled one, with flashing eyes. "You knew my wilfulness."

"Pretty well," sighed poor Mrs. Mulcaster.

"There—you confess it—and with all my life's happiness at stake! O mamma, I wish I could forgive you!"

"Louisa, do you hear *this*?" said Mrs. Mulcaster, turning to her younger daughter. "Should Providence ever send you children, recollect that too great tenderness may eost you their duty."

"Mildred is not herself, mamma," said Louey, with some warmth. "I do believe she is mad."

"I thank you, Louisa, for your very kind and sisterly remark," said Mildred, majestically. "I shall at least know where I need not seek comfort or sympathy in my sorrow."

"You told us, dear, you did not want any," replied Louisa.

Mildred put her tiny hands to her face.

"Louey, Louey!" exclaimed her mother, "surely this is not the tone. Govern your temper, I beg, or I must request you to leave the room, until my suffering child is better able to endure such rebukes."

"I'm not suffering at all, mamma," said Mildred, bursting into a flood of tears.

"My darling, compose yourself. See, Louisa, what your violence has done! Hark, hark! There's a visitor. Quick, Louisa. Not at home."

"Stop, Louey," said Mildred, wiping her beautiful eyes, and regaining her dignity. "This must not be. Let them come. Let anybody come. Mamma, I am ashamed of you. Would you wish it said that your daughter was breaking her heart in solitude because her lover had deserted her for his scullion?"

"Because," remarked Louisa, dryly, "that would hardly represent the facts!"

"Hush, both of you," said Mrs. Mulcaster, authoritatively.

And the servant announced

"Colonel Lugard."

The colonel saw at a glance that tidings of some sort had reached The Haie. Nevertheless, the smile he had worn on entering did not relax; but, on the contrary, broadened into a decided laugh.

"I caught sight of Miss Shrapnell's pony-carriage," he said, "as I turned into the drive and quickened my pace to a churning gallop. But I'm only in time to restore order. Whenever I cannot anticipate my fair neighbour of Battery-Boombe, I make a point of following her as promptly as possible. And you can hardly imagine, my dear ladies, how much I am able to effect, in binding up mental hurts, correcting intelligence, straightening distorted facts, and general repairs of a like description. I am a complete ambulance-corps, attached to the division Shrapnell. Who's hit now? Come,

tell the doctor. Well, my dear Miss Louisa, *you* look the gravest. I begin with you. The last piece of county gossip conveyed to you related to—to—shall I go on? A wedding."

Mrs. Mulcaster trembled, and glanced at Mildred; but her daughter's calm, fixed look, and the colonel's beaming smile, reassured her. She let him go on.

"You," he said, addressing them all, "like myself, have heard a ridiculous rumour connecting the name of our young neighbour, George Gosling, with one so far beneath him in station, that the jest—and a very bad and malicious one it was—ought to have been at once apparent."

Mildred's look thanked the speaker so eloquently, that a sudden thrill shot through his heart, for he knew, that unlucky colonel, that there was *more*, considerably more, to say. With that radiant glance, too joyful for disguise, entered into the colonel's startled soul the conviction that Mildred loved, and that he himself, purposing only to clear their general favourite, George, from an unworthy rumour, must, if he told his story out, scatter worse confusion than Miss Shrapnell herself!

He knew, in common with many others, that a union between the houses of Gosling and Mulcaster had been ranked among the very probable events of the county; but of the actual engagement, and its rupture, he knew nothing. Mrs. Mulcaster had, at his last visit, mentioned in a rather significant manner that intercourse with Gosling Graize had diminished. When, therefore, the report reached him that George was about to be married, and to one of his own domestic servants, his astonishment had been entirely limited to his young friend's selection. "There has been a row—a lovers' quarrel—a rash move of the rebel George," thought the perplexed officer, "and of *that*, bar the cook, they know nothing. Halt, there. Threes about!"

But this prudent manœuvre was not to be executed. The "three" before him would not permit it. Convinced of the falsehood of Miss Shrapnell's tidings, Mrs. Mulcaster saw no objection to continuing the subject.

"It is curious how circumstantial falsehood has become of late. My only wonder is that we were not favoured with all the interesting particulars of Geo—Sir George Gosling's courtship."

"Ha, ha!" said the colonel. "Gossip, you know, grows like the Highland cairn. Everybody adds a stone!"

"Scandalous. Stories like these, devoid of the merest atom of foundation, should be visited with some severe social penalty."

"Ahem!" said the colonel—"yes."

"You don't agree with me?"

"Perfectly. Without foundation—yes. *Such*," added the colonel, briskly, "could not be too severely reprehended."

"Such as *this*," said Mrs. Mulcaster, fixing him to the point.

The poor colonel winced. His sense of justice, even to a Shrapnell, was keen.

"I—I—the fact is, Will Crooke—" (Will Crooke, once his orderly, now his groom, was the colonel's reserve in difficulty; but here

William could not act. The appeal was only a sign of distress.)

"I beg your pardon. Will—?"

"Yes. The—the fact is, I am a very poor retailer of gossip, and am sure to make some blunder or other. But Will—Will is the man. That fellow chronicles every incident in the neighbourhood; and sometimes, as we are jogging along the road, gallops up, saluting, and reports some nonsense he has picked up, as if it were tidings from an outpost. Well, I must say good morning."

"You will do no such thing," said Mrs. Mulcaster, decisively, "until you have explained why you hesitated when I said there was no pretext for this wild story of Miss Shrapnell's."

"Did I hesitate?" said the colonel. "No—did I?" He glanced uneasily at Mildred. Should he tell all he knew, all that the too-reliable Will had been reporting to him, up to the moment that he, the colonel, dismounted at the door?

Relief came from an unexpected quarter.

"Sir George Gosling has *not* decided to marry his cook," said Mildred, with a perfectly steady voice and look. "Will you tell us, Colonel Lugard, if you are aware of his engagement to any other lady?"

Had the colonel detected the slightest change of colour, the minutest tremour of tone, he would have fenced with the question, direct as it was. Taking courage, however, from the speaker's, he boldly admitted—of course, on the authority of Will Croke—that the young baronet was understood to have made his selection, and that it had fallen upon a young lady every way qualified to grace her future station.

"That is—very well," said Mildred, in the same steady voice; "and—who—" but there the sound suddenly became a whisper, and ceased.

"Who is it?" asked Louisa.

"You remember," replied the colonel, "my mentioning a young person of singular appearance (some might call her handsome), whom I met in the park, and who picked up my—"

A cry from Mrs. Mulcaster! Louisa glancing like a white meteor across the room! She was barely in time. Mildred fell into her sister's arms, her beautiful hair flooding the ground. Her desperate attempt to enact the heroine had failed. Nature triumphed.

As for the poor colonel, alarmed yet helpless, as men usually are under such circumstances, and conscience-stricken besides, after making a feint towards the bell, then towards the window, murmurs of "Will Croke" issuing from his lips, he judged it best to sound a retreat. While lingering in the hall, a message from Mrs. Mulcaster announced that her daughter, restored to consciousness, had been conveyed to her room, and that she herself begged him to return.

"Can you," she said, "spare me five minutes longer?"

"Can I, my dear lady," exclaimed the gossip-

loving veteran, "I *will*." The colonel then related all he knew from Will Croke about the meeting in the rose garden, the encounter with the dog, and the sudden engagement between Sir George and Esther Vann.

"He had known her long?"

"Since five o'clock in the morning," said the colonel; "at which hour they met, quite accidentally, in the rose-pleasance. The acquaintance, however, ripened very rapidly. George's black dog, Swartz, selected that opportune moment for doing what, in my humble opinion, his master must have done before him. He went mad. The insane parties met, and but for the really heroic conduct of this girl, Esther Vann, very grave results might have ensued. If she did not actually save his life, she delivered him, at the risk of her own, from imminent peril. They were engaged before she quitted the house that day. The marriage is to take place almost immediately."

"A most delicate proceeding!" exclaimed the lady.

"It was not so purposed," resumed the colonel, revelling in the full tide of gossip, "but there was a row. Before George had made up his mind to inform his sister, Lady Haughfield, of his new engagement, some one (I know not who) did it for him. Down came my lady as fast as four horses could bring her, to remonstrate. No avail. George was kind, but immutable. This girl, who, he admitted, was his cook's niece and a nursery governess, but decently educated, should be his wife. Clara, in despair, telegraphed for Haughfield. (A bad move.) Down comes my lord, secretly furious, and, at the first interview, lost all that slight amount of temper he usually possesses. Gosling had borne with his sister, but he wouldn't stand *that*; and, to end the story, his visitors departed, carrying with them the assurance that George would resent their ill-advised and worse-managed interposition, by carrying out his intention at the very earliest moment to which the young lady could be prevailed on to agree. What arguments he used," concluded the colonel, "I cannot pretend to say; but of this I am certain—Will Croke *knows* it to be a fact—that the girl has consented to shorten, very materially, the interval for which, with a propriety for which we can't deny her credit, she had at first stipulated. The cook, her aunt, has removed to a small farm-house a few miles from hence, where her niece will, no doubt, join her, and the ceremony will take place at the little village—Rosedale—close at hand."

"A thousand thanks, my good friend," said Mrs. Mulcaster, rising nervously, and looking considerably alarmed at the task before her.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER III. THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

MR. CARRUTHERS was an early man; no danger of any skulking among the numerous hands which found employment on the Poynings estate. If the eye of the master be indeed the spur of the servant, Mr. Carruthers's dependents had quite enough of that stimulant. He made his rounds every morning at an hour which the indoor servants, who were obliged to have breakfast ready on his return, considered heathenish, and the out-door servants declared savoured of slave-driving. Mrs. Brookes knew that she should have no difficulty in procuring a private interview with her mistress on the morning following Mr. Dalrymple's visit, as an hour and a half always elapsed between Mr. Carruthers's leaving the house and his wife's ringing for her maid. The old woman looked worn and weary and very old, as she peered from behind a red-cloth door, which shut off the corridor on which Mr. Carruthers's dressing-room opened from the grand gallery, and watched her master take his creaking way down the staircase, looking as he went more full of self-importance than usual, and treading more heavily, as if the weight of the Home Office communication had got into his boots.

When he had disappeared, and she had heard the click of the lock as he opened the great door and went out into the pure fresh morning air, Mrs. Brookes emerged from behind the partition door, and softly took the way to Mrs. Carruthers's bedroom. The outer door was slightly open, the heavy silken curtain within hung closely over the aperture. The old woman pushed it gently aside, and, noiselessly crossing the room, drew the window curtain, and let in sufficient light to allow her to see that Mrs. Carruthers was still sleeping. Her face, pale, and even in repose bearing a troubled expression, was turned towards the old woman, who seated herself in an arm-chair beside the bed, and looked silently and sadly on the features, whose richest bloom and earliest sign of fading she had so faithfully watched.

"How am I to tell her?" she thought. "How

am I to make her see what I see, suspect what I suspect? and yet she must know all, for the least imprudence, a moment's forgetfulness, would ruin him. How am I to tell her?"

The silver bell of a little French clock on the chimney-piece rang out the hour melodiously, but its warning struck upon the old woman's ear menacingly. There was much to do, and little time to do it in; she must not hesitate longer. So she laid her withered, blanched old hand upon the polished, ivory-white fingers of the sleeper, lying with the purposelessness of deep sleep upon the coverlet, and addressed her as she had been used to do in her girlhood, and her early desolate widowhood, when her humble friend had been well-nigh her only one.

"My dear," she said, "my dear." Mrs. Carruthers's hand twitched in her light grasp; she turned her head away with a troubled sigh, but yet did not wake. The old woman spoke again: "My dear, I have something to say to you."

Then Mrs. Carruthers awoke fully, and to an instantaneous comprehension that something was wrong. All her fears, all her suspicions of the day before, returned to her mind in one flash of apprehension, and she sat up white and breathless.

"What is it, Ellen? Has he found out? Does he know?"

"Who? What do you mean?"

"Mr. Carruthers. Does he know George was here?"

"God forbid," said the old woman, in a trembling tone.

She felt the task she had before her almost beyond her power of execution. But her mistress's question, her instinctive fear, had given her a little help.

"No," she said, "he knows nothing, and God send he may neither know nor suspect anything about our dear boy; but you must be quiet now and listen to me, for I must have said my say before Dixon comes—she must not find me here."

"Why *are* you here?" asked Mrs. Carruthers, who had sat up in bed, and was now looking at the old woman, with a face which had no more trace of colour than the pillow from which it had just been raised. "Tell me, Ellen; do not keep me in suspense. Is anything wrong about George? It must concern *him*, whatever it is."

"My dear," began Mrs. Brookes—and now she held the slender fingers tightly in her withered palm—"I fear there is something very wrong with George."

"Is he—is he dead?" asked the mother, in a faint voice.

"No, no; he is well and safe, and far away from this, I hope and trust."

Mrs. Carruthers made no answer, but she gazed at her old friend with irresistible, pitiful entreaty. Mrs. Brookes answered the dumb appeal.

"Yes, my dear, I'll tell you all. I must, for his sake. Do you know what was the business that brought that strange gentleman here, he that went out with master, and dined here last night? No, you don't. I thought not. Thank God, you have got no hint of it from any one but me."

"Go on, go on," said Mrs. Carruthers, in a yet fainter voice.

"Do you remember, when George was here in February, you gave him money to buy a coat?"

"Yes," Mrs. Carruthers rather sighed than said.

"He bought one at Evans's, and he was remarked by the old man, who would know him again if he saw him. The business on which the strange gentleman came to master, was to get him to help, as a magistrate, in finding the person who bought that coat at Evans's, Amherst."

"But why? What had he done? How was the coat known?"

"My dear," said Mrs. Brookes, and now she laid one arm gently round her mistress's shoulder as she leaned against the pillows, "the wearer of that coat is suspected of having murdered a man, whose body was found by the river-side in London the other day."

"My God!" moaned the mother, and a hue as of death overspread her features.

"My dear, he didn't do it. I'm sure he didn't do it. I would stake my soul upon it; it is some dreadful mistake. Keep up until I have done, for God's sake, and George's sake, keep up—remember there is no danger unless you lose courage and give them a hint of anything. Be sure we shall find he has sold the coat to some one else, and that some one has done this dreadful thing. But you must keep up—here, let me bathe your face and hands while I am talking, and then I'll go away, and, when Dixon comes, you must just say you are not well, and don't mean to get up to breakfast, and then I shall have an excuse for coming to you. There! you are better now, I am sure. Yes, yes, don't try to speak; I'll tell you without asking," she went on, in a rapid whisper. "The strange gentleman and master saw Evans, and he told them when he sold the coat, and the sort of person he sold it to; but Gibson and Thomas say he could not have told them distinct, for they heard the strange gentleman saying to master, in the carriage, that the description was of no use. And I am certain

sure that there is not the least suspicion that he has ever been in Amherst since he bought the coat."

"I don't understand," stammered Mrs. Carruthers. "When—when did this happen?"

"A few days ago: it's all in the papers."

Mrs. Carruthers groaned.

"Nothing about George, but about finding the body and the coat. It is all here." The old woman took a tightly folded newspaper from her pocket. The light was too dim for her to read its contents to her mistress, who was wholly incapable of reading them herself. Mrs. Brookes, paper in hand, was going to the window, to withdraw the curtain completely, when she paused.

"No," she said; "Dixon will be here too soon. Better that you should ring for her at once, and send her for me. Can you do this, my dear? keeping yourself up by remembering that this is only some dreadful mistake, and that George never did it—no, no more than you did. Can you let me go away for a few minutes, and then come back to you? Remember, we cannot be too careful, for his sake, and if Dixon found me here at an unusual hour, the servants would know there is some secret or another between us."

"I can bear anything—I can do anything you tell me," was Mrs. Carruthers's answer, in a whisper.

"Well then, first lie down, and I will close the curtains and leave you. When I have had time to get to my room, ring for Dixon. Tell her you are ill. When she lets the light in she will see that for herself, and desire her to send me to you."

In another minute, the room was once more in darkness, and Mrs. Brookes went down the grand staircase, in order to avoid meeting any of the servants, crossed the hall, and gained her own apartment without being observed. A short time, but long to her impatience, had elapsed, when Mrs. Carruthers's maid knocked at the door, and having received permission to enter, came in with an important face. She delivered the message which Mrs. Brookes was expecting, and added that she had never seen her lady look so ill in all her born days.

"Looks more like a corpse, I do assure you, than like the lady as I undressed last night, and circles under her eyes, dreadful. I only hope it ain't typhus, for I'm dreadful nervous, not being used to sickness, which indeed I never engaged for. But, if you please, Mrs. Brookes, you was to go to her immediate, and I'm to let Miss Carruthers know as she's to make tea this morning for master, all to their two selves, which he won't like it, I dare say."

Then the talkative damsel went her way to Mrs. Carruthers's room, and Mrs. Brookes hurried to that of her unhappy mistress. She had again raised herself in the bed, and was looking eagerly towards the door, with hollow, haggard eyes, and lips ashy pale, whose trembling she in vain tried to control.

"Lock both doors, Ellen," she said, "and tell

me all. Give me the paper; I can read it—I can, indeed.”

She took it, and read it steadily through—read it with the same horrible emotion, a thousand times intensified, which had agitated the faithful servant a few hours previously. Standing by the bedside, Mrs. Brookes gazed upon her pale, convulsed features, as she read, and ever, as she saw the increasing agony which they betrayed, she murmured in accents of earnest entreaty:

“Don’t, my dear, for God’s sake, don’t, not for a moment, don’t you believe it. He sold the coat, depend upon it. It looks very bad, very black and bad, but you may be sure there’s no truth in it. He sold the coat.”

She spoke to deaf ears. When Mrs. Carruthers had read the last line of the account of the inquest on the body of the unknown man, the paper dropped from her hand; she turned upon the old nurse a face which, from that moment, she never had the power to forget, and said:

“He wore it—I saw it on him on Friday,” and the next moment slipped down among the pillows, and lay as insensible as a stone.

The old woman gave no alarm, called for no assistance, but silently and steadily applied herself to recalling Mrs. Carruthers to consciousness. She had no fear of interruption. Mr. Carruthers invariably went direct to the breakfast-room on returning from his morning tour of inspection, and Clare would not visit Mrs. Carruthers in her own apartment unasked. So Mrs. Brookes set the windows and doors wide open, and let the sweet morning air fan the insensible face, while she applied all the remedies at hand. At length Mrs. Carruthers sighed deeply, opened her eyes, and raised her hand to her forehead, where it came in contact with the wet hair.

“Hush, my dear,” said Mrs. Brookes, as she made an almost inarticulate attempt to speak. “Do not try to say anything yet. Lie quite still, until you are better.”

Mrs. Carruthers closed her eyes again and kept silent. When, after an interval, she began to look more life-like, the old woman said, softly:

“You must not give way again like this, for George’s sake. I don’t care about his wearing the coat. I know it looks bad, but it is a mistake, I am quite sure. Don’t I know the boy as well as you do, and maybe better, and don’t I know his tender heart, with all his wildness, and that he never shed a fellow-creature’s blood in anger, or for any other reason. But it’s plain he is suspected—not he, for they don’t know him, thank God, but the man that wore the coat, and we must warn him, and keep it from master. Master would go mad, I think, if anything like suspicion or disgrace came of Master George, more than the disgrace he thinks the poor boy’s goings on already. You must keep steady and composed, my dear, and you must write to him. Are you listening to me? Do you understand me?” asked the old woman, anxiously, for Mrs. Carruthers’s eyes

were wild and wandering, and her hand twitched convulsively in her grasp.

“Yes, yes,” she murmured, “but I tell you, Ellen, he wore the coat—my boy wore the coat.”

“And I tell you, I don’t care whether he wore the coat or not,” repeated Mrs. Brookes, emphatically. “He can explain that, no doubt of it; but he must be kept out of trouble, and you must be kept out of trouble, and the only way to do that, is to let him know what brought the strange gentleman to Poynings, and what he and master found out. Remember, he never did this thing, but, my dear, he has been in bad hands lately, you know that; for haven’t you suffered in getting him out of them, and I don’t say but that he may be mixed up with them that did. I’m afraid there can’t be any doubt of that, and he must be warned. Try and think of what he told you about himself, not only just now, but when he came here before, and you will see some light, I am sure.”

But Mrs. Carruthers could not think of anything, could not remember anything, could see no light. A deadly horrible conviction had seized upon her, iron fingers clutched her heart, a faint sickening terror held her captive, in body and spirit; and as the old woman gazed at her, and found her incapable of answering, the fear that her mistress was dying then and there before her eyes took possession of her. She folded up the newspaper which had fallen from Mrs. Carruthers’s hand, upon the bed, replaced it in her pocket, and rang the bell for Dixon.

“My mistress is very ill,” she said, when Dixon entered the room. “You had better go and find master, and send him here. Tell him to send for Dr. Munns at once.”

“Dixon gave a frightened, sympathising glance at the figure on the bed, over which the old woman was bending with such kindly solicitude, and then departed on her errand. She found Mr. Carruthers still in the breakfast-room. He was seated at the table, and held in his hand a newspaper, from which he had evidently been reading, when Dixon knocked at the door; for he was holding it slightly aside, and poising his gold eye-glass in the other hand, when the woman entered. Mr. Carruthers was unaccustomed to being disturbed, and he did not like it, so that it was in a tone of some impatience that he said:

“Well, Dixon, what do you want?”

“If you please, sir,” replied Dixon, hesitatingly, “my mistress is not well.”

“So I hear,” returned her master; “she sent word she did not mean to appear at breakfast.” He said it rather huffily, for not to appear at breakfast was, in Mr. Carruthers’s eyes, not to have a well-regulated mind, and not to have a well-regulated mind was very lamentable and shocking indeed.

“Yes, sir,” Dixon went on, “but I’m afraid she’s very ill indeed. She has been fainting this long time, sir, and Mrs. Brookes can’t bring her to at all. She sent me to ask you to send for Dr. Munns at once, and will you have the goodness to step up and see my mistress, sir?”

"God bless my soul," said Mr. Carruthers, pettishly, but rising as he spoke, and pushing his chair away. "This is very strange; she has been exposing herself to cold, I suppose. Yes, yes, go on and tell Mrs. Brookes I am coming, as soon as I send Gibson for Dr. Munns.

Dixon left the room, and Mr. Carruthers rang the bell, and desired that the coachman should attend him immediately. When Dixon had entered the breakfast-room, Clare Carruthers had been standing by the window, looking out on the garden, her back turned towards her uncle. She had not looked round once during the colloquy between her uncle and his wife's maid, but had remained quite motionless. Now Mr. Carruthers addressed her.

"Clare," he said, "you had better go to Mrs. Carruthers." But his niece was no longer in the room; she had softly opened the French window, and passed into the flower-garden, carrying among the sweet, opening flowers of the early summer, and into the serene air, a face which might have vied in its rigid terror with the face up-stairs. When Mr. Carruthers had come in that morning, and joined Clare in the pretty breakfast-room, he was in an unusually pleasant mood, and had greeted his niece with uncommon kindness. He had found everything in good order out of doors. No advantage had been taken of his absence to neglect the inexorable sweepings and rollings, the clippings and trimmings, the gardening and grooming. So Mr. Carruthers was in good humour in consequence, and also because he was still nourishing the secret sense of his own importance, which had sprung up in his magisterial breast under the flattering influence of Mr. Dalrymple's visit. So when he saw Clare seated before the breakfast equipage, looking in her simple, pretty morning dress as fair and bright as the morning itself, and when he received an intimation that he was not to expect to see his wife at breakfast, he recalled the resolution he had made last night, and determined to broach the subject of Mr. Dalrymple's visit to his niece without delay.

A pile of letters and newspapers lay on a salver beside Mr. Carruthers's plate, but he did not attend to them until he had made a very respectable beginning in the way of breakfast. He talked to Clare in a pleasant tone, and presently asked her if she had been looking at the London papers during the last few days. Clare replied that she seldom read anything beyond the deaths, births, and marriages, and an occasional leader, and had not read even so much while she had been at the Sycamores.

"Why do you ask, uncle?" she said. "Is there any particular news?"

"Why, yes, there is," replied Mr. Carruthers, pompously. "There is a matter attracting public attention just now in which I am, strange to say, a good deal interested—in which responsibility has been laid on me, indeed, in a way which, though flattering—very flattering indeed—is, at the same time, embarrassing."

Mr. Carruthers became more and more pompous with every word he spoke. Clare could

not repress a disrespectful notion that he bore an absurd resemblance to the turkey-cock, whose struttings and gobblings had often amused her in the poultry-yard, as he mouthed his words and moved his chin about in his stiff and spotless cravat. His niece was rather surprised by the matter of his discourse, as she was not accustomed to associate the idea of importance to society at large with Mr. Carruthers of Poynings, and cherished a rather settled conviction that, mighty potentate as he was within the handsome gates of Poynings, the world outside wagged very independently of him. She looked up at him with an expression of interest and also of surprise, but fortunately she did not give utterance to the latter and certainly predominant sentiment.

"The fact is," said Mr. Carruthers, "a murder has been committed in London under very peculiar circumstances. It is a most mysterious affair, and the only solution of the mystery hitherto suggested is that the motive is political."

He paused, cleared his throat, once more settled his chin comfortably, and went on, while Clare listened, wondering more and more how such a matter could affect her uncle. She was a gentle-hearted girl, but not in the least silly, and quite free from any sort of affectation; so she expressed no horror or emotion at the mere abstract idea of the murder, as a more young-ladyish young lady would have done.

"Yes, uncle?" she said, simply, as he paused.

Mr. Carruthers continued:

"The murdered man was found by the river-side, stabbed, and robbed of whatever money and jewellery he had possessed. He was a good-looking man, young, and evidently a foreigner; but there were no means of identifying the body, and the inquest was adjourned—in fact, is still adjourned."

"What an awful death to come by, in a strange country!" said Clare, solemnly. "How dreadful to think that his friends and relatives will perhaps never know his fate! But how did they know the poor creature was a foreigner, uncle?"

"By his dress, my dear. It appears he had on a fur-lined coat, with a hood—quite a foreign article of dress; and the only person at the inquest able to throw any light on the crime was a waiter at an eating-house in the Strand, who said that the murdered man had dined there on a certain evening—last Thursday, I believe—and had worn the fur coat, and spoken in a peculiar squeaky voice. The waiter felt sure he was not an Englishman, though he spoke good English. So the inquest was adjourned in order to get more evidence, if possible, as to the identity of the murdered man, and also that of the last person who had been seen in his company. And this brings me to the matter in which I am interested."

Clare watched her uncle with astonishment as he rose from his chair and planted himself upon the hearth-rug before the fireplace, now adorned with its summer ornaments of plants

and flowers, and draped in muslin. Taking up the familiar British attitude, and looking, if possible, more than ever pompous, Mr. Carruthers proceeded:

"You will be surprised to learn, Clare, that the visit of the gentleman who came here yesterday, and with whom I went out, had reference to this murder."

"How, uncle?" exclaimed Clare. "What on earth have you, or has any one here, to do with it?"

"Wait until I have done, and you will see," said Mr. Carruthers, in a tone of stately rebuke. "The last person seen in the company of the man afterwards found murdered, and who dined with him at the tavern, wore a coat which the waiter who recognised the body had chanced to notice particularly. The appearance of this person the man failed in describing with much distinctness, but he was quite positive about the coat, which he had taken from the man and hung up on a peg with his own hands. And now, Clare, I am coming to the strangest part of this strange story."

The girl listened with interest indeed, and with attention, but still wondering how her uncle could be involved in the matter, and perhaps feeling a little impatient at the slowness with which, in his self-importance, he told the story.

"I was much surprised," continued Mr. Carruthers, "to find in the gentleman who came here yesterday, and whose name was Dalrymple, an emissary from the Home Office, entrusted by Lord Wolstenholme with a special mission to me"—impossible to describe the pomposity of Mr. Carruthers's expression and utterance at this point—"to me. He came to request me to assist him in investigating this most intricate and important case. It is not a mere police case, you must understand, my dear. The probability is that the murdered man is a political refugee, and that the crime has been perpetrated" (Mr. Carruthers brought out the word with indescribable relish) "by a member of one of the secret societies in revenge for the defection of the victim, or in apprehension of his betrayal of the cause."

"What cause, uncle?" asked Clare, innocently. She was not of a sensational turn of mind, had no fancy for horrors as horrors, and was getting a little tired of her uncle's story.

"God knows, my dear; some of their liberty, fraternity, and equality nonsense, I suppose. At all events, this is the supposition, and to ask my aid in investigating the only clue in the possession of the government was the object of Mr. Dalrymple's visit yesterday. The man who was seen in the company of the murdered man by the waiter at the tavern, and who went away with him, wore a coat made by Evans of Amherst. You know him, Clare, the old man who does so much of our work here. I went to his shop with Mr. Dalrymple, and we found out all about the coat. He remembered it exactly, by the description, and told us when he had made it, two years ago, and when he had sold it, six weeks ago, to a person who

paid for it with a ten-pound note with the Post-office stamp upon it. The old man is not very bright, however, for though he remembered the circumstance, and found the date in his day-book, he could not give anything like a clear description of the man who had bought the coat. He could only tell us, in general terms, that he would certainly know him again, if he should see him; but he talked about a rather tall young man, neither stout nor thin, neither ugly nor handsome, dark-eyed and dark-haired, in short, the kind of description which describes nothing. We came away as wise as we went, except in the matter of the date of the purchase of the coat. That does not help much towards the detection of the murderer, as a coat may change hands many times in six weeks, if it has been originally bought by a dubious person. The thing would have been to establish a likeness between the man described by Evans, as the purchaser of the coat, and the man described by the waiter as the wearer of the coat at the tavern. But both descriptions are very vague."

"What was the coat like?" asked Clare, in a strange, deliberate tone.

"It was a blue Witney overcoat, with a label inside the collar, bearing Evans's name. The waiter at the tavern, where the murdered man dined, had read the name, and remembered it. This led to their sending to me, and my being known to the authorities as a very active magistrate" (here Mr. Carruthers swelled and pouted again with importance), "they naturally communicated with me. The question is, now, how I am to justify the very flattering confidence which Lord Wolstenholme has placed in me. It is a difficult question, and I have been considering it maturely. Mr. Dalrymple seems to think the clue quite lost. But I am not disposed to let it rest; I am determined to set every possible engine at work to discover whether the description given by the waiter, and that given by Evans, tally with one another."

"You said the inquest was adjourned, I think," said Clare.

"Yes, until to-day; but Mr. Dalrymple will not have learned anything. There will be an open verdict." (Here Mr. Carruthers condescendingly explained to his niece the meaning of the term.) "And the affair will be left to be unravelled in time. I am anxious to do all I can towards that end; it is a duty I owe to society, to Lord Wolstenholme, and to myself."

Clare had risen from her chair, and approached the window. Her uncle could not see her face, as he resumed his seat at the breakfast-table, and opened his letters in his usual deliberate and dignified manner. Being letters addressed to Mr. Carruthers of Poynings, they were, of course, important; but if they had not had that paramount claim to consideration, the communications in question might have been deemed dull and trivial. Whatever their nature, Clare Carruthers turned her head from the window, and furtively watched her uncle

during their perusal. He read them with uplifted eyebrows and much use of his gold-rimmed eye-glasses, as his habit was, but then laid them down without comment, and took up a newspaper.

"I dare say we shall find something about the business in this," he said, addressing his niece, but without turning his head in her direction. "Ah, I thought so; here it is. 'Mysterious circumstance, extraordinary supineness and stupidity of the police; no one arrested on suspicion; better arrest the wrong man, and tranquillise the public mind, than arrest no one at all.' I'm not convinced by that reasoning, I must say. What? No reason for regarding the murder as a political assassination? Listen to this, Clare;" and he read aloud, while she stood by the window, her back turned towards him, and listened, intently, greedily, with a terrible fear and sickness at her heart:

"The supposition that this atrocious crime has been committed from political motives has, in our opinion, no foundation in probability, and derives very little support from common sense. The appearance of the body, the fineness of the linen, the expensive quality of the attire, the torn condition of the breast and sleeves of the shirt, which seems plainly to indicate that studs, probably of value, had been wrenched violently out, the extreme improbability that an individual, so handsomely dressed as the murdered man, would have been out without money in his pocket, all indicate robbery at least; and if perhaps more than robbery, certainly not less, to have been the notice of the crime. An absurd theory has been founded upon a peculiarity in the dress of the victim, and upon a remark made by the only witness at the inquest about his tone of voice. Nothing is more likely, in our opinion, than a complete miscarriage of justice in this atrocious case. Suspicion has been arbitrarily directed in one channel, and the result will be, probably, the total neglect of other and more likely ones. While the political murderer is being theorised about and 'wanted,' the more ordinary criminal, the ruffian who kills for gain, and not for patriotism or principle, is as likely as not to escape comfortably, and enjoy his swag in some pleasant, unsuspected, and undisturbed retreat."

"Now, I call this most unjustifiable," said Mr. Carruthers, in a tone of dignified remonstrance and indignation. "Really, the liberty of the press is going quite too far. The government are convinced that the murder is political, and I can't see——"

It was at this point of Mr. Carruthers's harangue that he was interrupted by his wife's maid. When he again looked for Clare, she had disappeared, nor did he or any of the frightened and agitated household at Poynings see the young lady again for many hours. Dr. Munns arrived and found Mr. Carruthers considerably distressed at the condition in which Mrs. Carruthers was, also a little annoyed at that lady's want of consideration in being ill, and unable to refrain from hinting, with much

reserve and dignity of manner, that he was at present more than usually engaged in business of the last importance, which rendered it peculiarly unfortunate that he should have any additional care imposed on him—public importance, he took care to explain, and no less onerous than mysterious. But the worthy gentleman's pride and pomposity were soon snubbed by the extreme gravity of Dr. Munns's manner, as he answered his inquiries and put questions in his turn relative to his patient. The doctor was both alarmed and puzzled by Mrs. Carruthers's state. He told her husband she was very seriously ill; he feared brain fever had already set in. Could Mr. Carruthers account for the seizure in any way? No, Mr. Carruthers could not; neither could the housekeeper, nor Mrs. Carruthers's maid, both of whom were closely questioned, as having more and more frequent access to that lady's presence than any other members of the household.

Had Mrs. Carruthers heard any distressing intelligence? had she received a shock of any kind? the doctor inquired. Mr. Carruthers appeared to sustain one from the question. Of course not; certainly not; nothing of the kind, he replied, with some unrepressed irritation of manner, and secretly regarded the bare suggestion of such a possibility as almost indecent. Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings receive shocks indeed! The doctor, who knew and disregarded his peculiarities, calmly pursued his inquiries undeterred by Mr. Carruthers's demeanour, and, finding that nothing particular had happened, acknowledged that, there being no apparent cause to which so sudden and serious an illness could be attributed, he was the more uneasy as to its probable result. Then Mr. Carruthers caught the infection of his alarm, and all the best side of his character, all the real love and appreciation of his wife, ordinarily overlaid by his egotism, came out in full force, and the staunchest stickler for domestic fealty could not have demanded greater solicitude than the frightened husband exhibited.

In a wonderfully short space of time the house assumed the appearance which illness always gives. The servants went about their work whispering, and the sitting-rooms were silent and deserted. No one bestowed a thought on Clare. The attendants on the suffering woman, busily engaged in carrying out the orders given them by Dr. Munns, who remained for several hours with his patient—the alarmed husband, who wandered about disconsolately between his own library and his wife's room—all forgot the girl's existence. It was very late—within a few minutes of the usual dinner-hour—an inflexible period at Poynings—when Clare Carruthers crossed the flower-garden, entered the house by the window, through which she had left it, and stole gently up-stairs to her own room. She threw her hat and shawl upon her bed, and went to her dressing-table. There she stood for some minutes before the glass, holding

her disordered hair back with her hands—there were bits of grass and fragments of leaves in it, as though she had been lying with her fair head prone upon the ground—and gazing upon her young misery-stricken face. White about the full pure lips, where the rich blood ordinarily glowed, purple about the long fair eyelids and the blushing cheeks, heavy-eyed, the girl was piteous to see, and she knew it. The hours that had passed over since she left her uncle's presence in the morning had been laden with horror, with dread, with such anguish as had never in its lightest form touched her young spirit before, and she trembled as she marked the ravages they had made in her face.

"What shall I do?" she murmured, as though questioning her own forlorn image in the glass. "What shall I do? I dare not stay away from dinner, and what will they say when they see my face?"

She fastened up her hair, and bathed her face with cold water, then returned to the glass to look at it again; but the pallor was still upon the lips, the discoloration was still about the heavy eyelids. As she stood despairingly before the dressing-table, her maid came to her.

"The dinner-bell will not ring, ma'am," said the girl. "Mr. Carruthers is afraid of the noise for Mrs. Carruthers."

"Ay," said Clare, listlessly, still looking at the disfigured image in the glass. "How is she?"

"No better, ma'am; very bad indeed, I believe. But don't take on so, Miss Clare," her maid went on, affectionately. "She is not so bad as they say, perhaps; and, at all events, you'll knock yourself up and be no comfort to Mr. Carruthers."

A light flashed upon Clare. She had only to keep silence, and no one would find her out; her tears, her anguish, would be imputed to her share of the family trouble. Her maid, who would naturally have noticed her appearance immediately, expressed no surprise. Mrs. Carruthers was very ill, then. Something new had occurred since the morning, when there had been no hint of anything serious in her indisposition. The maid evidently believed her mistress acquainted with all that had occurred. She had only to keep quiet, and nothing would betray her ignorance. So she allowed the girl to talk, while she made some trifling change in her dress, and soon learned all the particulars of Mrs. Carruthers's illness, and the doctor's visit, of her uncle's alarm, and Mrs. Brookes's devoted attendance on her mistress. Then Clare, trembling, though relieved of her immediate apprehension of discovery, went down-stairs to join her uncle at their dreary dinner. He made no comment upon the girl's appearance, and, indeed, hardly spoke. The few words of sympathy which Clare ventured to say were briefly answered, and as soon as possible he left the dining-room. Clare sat by the table for a while, with her face buried in her hands, thinking,

suffering, but not weeping. She had no more tears to-day to shed.

Presently she went to Mrs. Carruthers's room, and sat down on a chair behind the door, abstracted and silent. In the large dimly-lighted room she was hardly seen by the watchers. She saw her uncle come in, and stand forlornly by the bed, then the doctor came, and several figures moved about silently and went away, and then there was no one but Mrs. Brookes sitting still as a statue beside the sufferer, who lay in a state of stupor. How long she had been in the room before the old woman perceived her, Clare did not know, but she felt Mrs. Brookes bending over her, and taking her hand, before she knew she had moved from the bedside.

"Pray go away and lie down, Miss Carruthers," the old woman said, half tenderly, half severely. "You can do no good here, no one can do any good here yet, and you will be ill yourself. We can't do with more trouble in the house, and crying your eyes out of your head, as you've been doing, won't help any one, my dear. I will send you word how she is the first thing in the morning."

The old woman raised the girl by a gentle impulse, as she spoke, and she went meekly away, Mrs. Brookes closing the door behind her with an unspoken reflection on the uselessness of girls, who, whenever anything is the matter, can do nothing but cry.

The night gradually fell upon Poynings, the soft, sweet, early summer night. It crept into the sick-room, and overshadowed the still form upon the bed, the form whose stillness was to be succeeded by the fierce unrest, the torturing, vague effort of fever; it closed over the stern pompous master of Poynings, wakeful and sorely troubled. It darkened the pretty chamber, decorated with a thousand girlish treasures, and simple adornments, in which Clare Carruthers was striving sorely with the first fierce trial of her prosperous young life. When it was at its darkest and deepest, the girl's swollen weary eyelids closed, conquered by the irresistible mighty benefactor of the young who suffer. Then, if any eye could have pierced the darkness and looked at her, as she lay sleeping, the stamp of a great fear upon her face, even in her slumber, and her breast shaken by frequent heavy sighs, it would have been seen that one hand was hidden under the pillow, and the fair cheek pressed tightly down upon it, for better security. That hand was closed upon three letters, severally addressed to the advertising department of three of the daily newspapers. The contents, which were uniform, had cost the girl hours of anxious and agonising thoughts. They were very simple, and were as follows, accompanied by the sum which she supposed their insertion would cost, very liberally estimated:

"The gentleman who showed a lady a sprig of myrtle on last Saturday is earnestly entreated by her not to revisit the place where he met her. He will inevitably be recognise!"

"God forgive me, if I am doing wrong in

this," Clare Carruthers had said with her last waking consciousness. "God forgive me, but I must save him if I can."

THREE DAYS IN THE DESERT.

IN the month of July, 1864, we left Alexandria for Tell el Kebir, the Turkish palace built by Mahomet Ali Pasha, in the Ooady (the ancient land of Goshen of the Bible). M. Guichard, the agricultural manager of the Suez Canal, had asked us to go and see the Bedouin festival of Abou Nichab, an Abyssinian saint, who died many hundred years ago, up the Nile, and whose arm-bones some devout worshipping had brought to the Suez desert, and buried. Whereupon, so runs the legend, the saint Abou Nichab followed his bones, and, rejoining them to his body, has reposed peacefully in his desert tomb ever since. The Bedouins come from great distances every year to pray at his shrine, and 1864 was the six hundredth anniversary of his death, so the gathering was to be large. Leaving Alexandria by morning train, we arrived at Zag-a-zig about three in the afternoon. There we found that the telegram announcing our departure from Alexandria had remained in the Suez Canal Company's telegraph office, as the clerk had gone to Tell el Kebir to see the fête. We got hold of his Arab servant, who had seen his master work the telegraphs, and between us we managed somehow to send a message, begging M. Guichard to meet us.

We then looked about for some means of transport, and found nothing but an old camel who had brought a load of straw from the fields. Just as we were debating as to mounting the uncomfortable brute, a cabriolet with one spring broken came slowly along the dyke of the Bahr de Moïse, the small canal which feeds the fresh-water canal to Ismailia and Port Said, and Suez on the other side. The poor horse had come sixty miles, from Ismailia; so we had him groomed and fed, and gave him, to the dismay of the Arab sals, or groom, a bottle of beer which we found in the telegraph clerk's room. Then we got some ropes, harnessed our camel tandem fashion in front, and started for a twenty-mile drive along the dyke. Such a road, such holes and hillocks! which with a broken spring were dreadful. After about four miles of this original proceeding, the camel lay down and refused to move, so we had to drag horse and cabriolet over him, and leave the beast roaring and grunting in the road. The poor old horse fell twice, and at about half-past seven, just as darkness was coming on, to our great relief we saw M. Guichard in his pony chaise coming full gallop towards us. Tell el Kebir was reached at nine, where a good dinner was most refreshing.

Next morning every one was astir early to start tents, mattresses, cooking utensils, and servants to Abou Nichab, about twelve miles off in the desert. To our dismay, we then discovered that the third pommel of the side-saddle

had been forgotten, and the horse Mrs. Ross was to ride was an inveterate buck-jumper, a kicker, and very violent. The Arab carpenter set to work under our directions, a wooden pommel was made and fastened with great trouble, and at one we started, accompanied by various officials of the Suez Canal Company.

The sun was intensely powerful, and we rode along, skirting the cultivated land, wrapped in our white abbaïhs and burnous, our heads, covered with kufiahs (large white or striped silk handkerchiefs with tassels), bowed over our saddle-bows; the thermometer considerably above one hundred. About four miles from Abou Nichab we struck into the desert, and soon heard shouting and the galloping of horses, and saw a cloud of sand. We were met by several hundred Bedouins firing their guns and shaking their long spears, decorated with ostrich feathers, above their heads. They charged down upon us, circling round at full speed, uttering the praises of M. Guichard, and rather astonished at Mrs. Ross on horseback, some of them never having seen an European lady ride. They could not make out how she rode with only one leg, as they supposed, seeing her sit sideways. Arrived at our camp, we found a big tent pitched on a small hillock, and a smaller one for Mrs. Ross adjoining, the Bedouintents being all round. There must have been at least five thousand Bedouins, some from Syria, some from up the Nile, and eight sheiks were there, who were invited to come and drink coffee with us. Old Mohamed Hassan, Sheik of the Anadies, seeing Mrs. Ross served first, rose, and gathering his ragged burnous about him, stalked out of the tent, saying he was not going to see a woman, a creature without a soul, served before him. In vain did M. Guichard explain that the Sultan of England was a woman, and that in Europe women always were served first; the old Bedouin walked away in high dudgeon. At dusk we had dinner under considerable difficulties: our table was crooked, our chairs sank in the sand, and tilted us over backwards; our lights were blown out, and a pariah dog stole our roast lamb. Afterwards we strolled about the encampment, and stood round an almeïh, who, recognising M. Guichard, began to sing his praises: "O Frangi, who loves the Arabs; who rides like a Bedawée; whose shot never misses its mark; who is strong as Antar, and yet kind as a woman; who never oppresses the poor, and whose house is open to all," &c. She then began dancing, or rather posturing, and a wonderful scene it was; the girl's graceful figure, her arms, thrown above her head, striking the tambourine, her face covered and glittering with strings of gold coins lighted up by the flickering torches and by the splendid Eastern full moon; a circle of Bedouins showing their admiration of her singing by long-drawn "ahs," and keeping time by clapping their hands.

We heard a drum and some flutes playing, and saw several enormous white and green flags planted some way off, and shouts of "Allah! Allah!" rung out in the quiet night. The der-

vishes and religious men had come with their flags, and a "zikr" was going on. The men of God stood near the flags, and, accompanied by the flutes, called out the praises of God. "O! Allah is great; he is merciful; and our lord Mahomet is his prophet;" and so on. Gradually a circle of men formed round them and began bowing their heads to the ground, and shouting "Allah! Allah!" They became intensely excited, tore off their clothes, howled and screeched "Allah!" foamed at the mouth, and one falling down in a fit, we moved towards our tents.

Next morning we were all up at four, sleep having been nearly impossible, and started for the Tomb of the Sheik, but, as it was filled with women, could not go in. M. Guichard had given thirty napoleons to be run for by the Bedouins. Two miles had been staked out by flags, and about thirty-five wished to start. Mrs. Ross was to start them; M. Guichard stood by the winning-post and started them back again. "*Shaitan*," or the devil, as Mrs. Ross's horse was called, was so violent, that, as soon as the Bedouins were off, she let him go, and arrived second, and coming back third. The same horse won both times, and had the prize; he was ridden without a saddle, and with a bit of rope for a bridle and bit, by a boy of fourteen, who deliberately stripped, and when told that this was not allowed, put an old rag round his middle. Directly after the race the winner disappeared in the desert, as his owners were afraid of the evil eye for him. On our way back to the camp, old Sheik Mohamed Hassan came up and made an amende honorable to Mrs. Ross, and, after a long conversation, he made her a formal proposal. "O lady, when thou art tired of thy white husband and needest change, come to Mohamed Hassan. By Allah, thou ridest like ten Bedaweels, and thy conversation is such that thy husband need never go to a coffee-shop for entertainment or knowledge. I will stand before thee, O lady, and serve thee like thy mame-luke if thou wilt come to me." The old sheik was much thanked for his flattering offer, and when we got under cover of our tent he insisted on serving his "*sitt*" (lady) himself with coffee. The heat was intense in the middle of the day, and we did not stir till four, when the Bedouins came and announced that they were going to perform a fantasia in our honour. The horsemen divided and fought a mock battle, with their different war-cries, whirling and circling about in the desert, firing their guns and pistols, shaking their long spears above their heads as they galloped down on the supposed enemy, then turning and flying, stooping low down on one side of their horse's neck. It was a most splendid sight—so wild and picturesque. Then several rode up to us, made their obedient horses kneel before us, shake hands, rear and kick, while others plauted their spear in the ground and galloped round and round it, holding it in their hand all the time. About six we invited twelve of the chief men among them to dine with us. We all squatted down in the

sand, round a huge brass tray placed on a stool, and began tearing off bits of the roast lamb, stuffed with pistachio-nuts; it was roasted whole, and with vegetables round. The most trying thing was when a remarkably dirty Bedouin would pull off a piece of flesh and stuff it into our mouths; we could not refuse it, as it was a great civility, but not a pleasant one. After the roast lamb came "*baklawi*," a Turkish sweet dish, composed of layers of paste as thin as a wafer, with honey and sugar between, a dish particularly to be recommended, and evidently in high favour with the Bedouins. We all agreed that it would be far pleasanter to return to Tell el Kebir and sleep in comfortable beds, so we mounted our horses at nine, and started by moonlight across the desert, accompanied by M. Guichard's three favourite Bedouins—Saoud, the younger brother of Sheik Mohamed Hassan, a very handsome young fellow, with three long love-locks as the high-caste Bedouins always wear, and two of his cousins. As we rode across the boundless stretch of sand, lighted up with the silver rays of the full moon, we heard the jackals, wolves, foxes, and gazelles, and the different calls of the night-birds round us. Now and then we saw some animals slink away, and disturbed others feeding on the carcase of a camel. It was a most curious and impressive ride, our Bedouin companions chanting their monotonous song to enliven the way, and uttering imprecations on the horses when they stumbled over a hillock, or caught their feet in a jerboa's hole, we might have fancied ourselves a body of marauders in search of booty.

Tell el Kebir was reached in about two hours, and now arose the momentous question, how to get into the old palace. We found the "*kefir*," or watchman, fast asleep, and could not find the key. Any of my readers who know the East will remember what an Arab's sleep is like. A dormouse in the depth of winter is nothing to him. We lifted up the watchman, and let him fall again; we banged his head against the ground; we fired our pistols over his head; as a last resource, we pricked his arm with Saoud's dagger, and at last woke him, and got in. Next morning, at daybreak, Saoud woke us, and said the gazelles were moving, and that if we would come and hunt, he was sure we should have a good day. The horses were saddled, and away we went, with three good Syrian greyhounds and four falcons. A hare was started and killed by the dogs alone, after a good run, and soon after we caught sight of a troop of gazelles. A council of war was held, and we scattered, so as to partly surround the gazelles in a half-moon. When Saoud gave the signal, two hawks were thrown up, and away we went as hard as we could gallop. The hawks soon settled on their game, and baffled the gazelles, so that they could not run straight, which allowed the dogs to get near them, by running what we call "*cunning*." After several miles' hard riding, one gazelle was pulled down by the dogs, the other got away. The dead gazelle was hoisted

on to the dromedary, which always accompanies M. Guichard on his hunting expeditions, partly to carry the game, and partly because his rider, being perched up so high, can sweep the desert for miles. Soon after, two gazelles were signalled by Abdoo on the dromedary, and we again spread out in a half-moon; but they saw us, and were off. As a last chance, M. Guichard threw up the two fresh falcons, and encouraging our dogs, away we went. One of the gazelles lagged very considerably behind the other, and we gained on it fast. M. Guichard was first up, and flinging himself from his horse, saved the life of a poor little baby gazelle. The mother would not leave its young, and this explained our coming up with her. The small creature rode home on Mrs. Ross's knees, and a goat was given it as step-mother. It grew up to be most impudent and amusing, bounding and springing about the rooms, destroying all the divans by scratching, to make a soft bed, and eating all the papers it could find. The curious thing is to see gazelles eat tobacco. They will trot up to a narghilé or chibouk, push the fire off with their soft velvety noses, and chew the hot tobacco with immense gusto.

On our way home we started a hare, which Saoud shot through the head. Mrs. Ross complimented him on his splendid shot, when Saoud, salaaming low, answered, "Not so, O lady! It was not my skill which directed the bullet, but the good luck your visit has brought among us." M. Guichard was forced to confess that the Bedouins of the desert understood the art of compliment far better than the French.

We arrived at Tell el Kebir in the afternoon, and to our great regret had to leave at midnight for Zag-a-zig, in order to catch the train at six in the morning. We reached Alexandria about four, after a most curious and agreeable visit.

STEAM IN THE STREETS.

THE steam-horse in the street is not a new idea. Did not Sir Isaac Newton himself conceive such a thought, nearly two hundred years ago? There is a certain book of his; in which he speculates upon a globular vessel perched upon four little wheels, a jet-pipe protruding from one side, a seat adjacent to the other side, and a triumphant charioteer on the seat. The vessel being used as a steam-generator, and steam issuing from the tube, the resistance and reaction of the air would drive the vessel on its wheels in the opposite direction.

But although Newton did not, so far as we know, attempt to realise his notion, there was an ingenious Frenchman, exactly midway in time between Newton's days and ours, who really did make a steam-carriage. This was M. Cugnot, whose small rude machine is still preserved at Paris. At first he made a model, which he exhibited to the *Compte de Saxe*. Then, under the patronage of the *Duc de Choiseul*, he made a steam-carriage, which not only

travelled, but travelled with such energy as to travel through a brick wall. Hence arose a belief that steam-power was too good, too strong for the purpose, and could not be controlled. Poor Cugnot was shelved; and his machine, if it does not now, did a few years ago, occupy a place in the *Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers*. Some years before this—that is, more than a century ago—Dr. Robison conceived the possibility of propelling a road vehicle by steam power; and James Watt, to whom the thought was communicated, afterwards sketched a practical plan for the purpose. He said to himself, "Let us form a boiler of wooden staves, hooped together like a cask; let us put an iron furnace in it, separated from the wood by water; let the water boil, and the steam be made to move a piston in a cylinder; let the piston move some wheels, and let these move some other wheels on which the cask is placed; and, lo, we shall have a steam-carriage." But Watt, who had many schemes in his head, allowed this one to die out; and he, as well as Newton, took rank among the thinkers rather than the workers on this subject.

The person who really came second after Cugnot as coachmaker in this fashion, was Mr. Murdoch, a Cornish engineer, who, about eighty years ago, caused a little steam-carriage to run along the highway near Redruth. The Cornish miners, prone to superstition, saw a fiery little monster running along the road one dark night. They cried out, they ran, more than half believing that the arch fiery monster of all monsters was close at their heels. This contrivance of Mr. Murdoch's, whatever its details may have been, soon lapsed into forgetfulness. Next came Mr. William Symington, who tried his hand at steam-coaches as well as steam-boats: so far, at least, as to construct a model. In his model, which was exhibited at Edinburgh, the moving mechanism was placed in the back of the carriage, and all the several portions seemed suitably placed in regard to each other; but the execrable state of the roads, and the difficulty of procuring adequate supplies of fuel and water, deterred Symington from any further development of his scheme. About the same time, one Oliver Evans, an American, of Pennsylvania, suggested to the legislature of that state the encouragement of many inventive schemes of his, one of which was a steam-carriage to run on common roads. Whether he was too clever for the legislators, or they were for him, nothing definite came of the proposal. He was a prophet, however; for he predicted the arrival of days when carriages propelled by steam would come into general use on turnpike-roads for the transport of passengers as well as goods, and that they would travel, ay, fifteen miles an hour.

We hence see that, before the advent of the present century, men had thought as busily of steam-carriages as of steam-boats and of railways: all the three kinds of invention being about in the same tentative position at the same time. Then, when this century was only two years old, Messrs. Trevethick and Vivian tried

their skill at a new kind of steam-carriage. They adopted a form of construction much lighter and more portable than had before been tried. The carriage was mounted on four wheels, the hinder pair to bear the greater portion of the weight, the front pair to be chiefly used to guide or steer; the boiler and a horizontal cylinder were placed at the back of the hind axle; then there was a whole family of pistons, rods, cross-pieces, guides, cranks, axles, toothed-wheels, fly-wheels, levers, and breaks, too numerous to mention. It was by far the most scientific steam-carriage (locomotive was a word not then in fashion) that had been devised. One of the carriages so constructed ran experimentally on a bit of road where the mighty Euston station now stands—classical ground, we may call it, in the history of steam.

A long pause then ensued. Roads were bad, people were frightened, and a costly war absorbed the general attention. Hardly anything is to be found, during a period of twenty years, bearing upon the use of steam-carriages on common roads. Then, however, came forth into light one Julius Griffiths, who employed the redoubtable Bramah to construct the more delicate parts of a new machine. It had two cylinders and pistons instead of one; it had chains and helical springs, to deaden the concussion of the machinery; it had a tubular boiler, and many novel and ingenious appliances. But whether Griffiths had no money (Limited Liability was not known in those days), or the public had too much apathy, or the machine too many defects, certain it is that nothing came of it. One David Gordon, about forty years ago, asserted that a locomotive (let us now use the term) cannot ascend a hill without something to make the wheels bite the ground: to overcome this supposed difficulty, he contrived an extraordinary carriage in which a steam-engine, put inside a large iron drum, caused it to rotate, very much in the same way as a squirrel makes his cage rotate; the engine caused the drum to roll along the ground, and the drum drew a carriage after it. Very funny and very ingenious; but this steam-squirrel died, and left no children. David must have been an original genius, for he next contrived a locomotive with six legs, which were to help the wheels to get up hill. It must have been very amusing to see this new insect taking its walks abroad, with its six legs or vibrators, having something like veritable knees and insteps, alternately dangling and stretching. It was really ingenious; but engineers found out, about that time, that ordinary wheels would hold to the ground firmly enough for the ascent of any ordinarily steep road.

At about the period when the Liverpool and Manchester Railway began to be seriously considered, say forty years ago, the inventors of road-locomotives cropped up in great abundance. Mr. Goldsworthy Gurney, Mr. James, Mr. Hancock, tried their skill; then Messrs. Burstal, and Messrs. Summers and Ogle; then Mr. Heaton, Dr. Church, and Colonel Macerone; then Messrs. Dance and Field; then Mr. Scott Rus-

sell, since become so famous in other departments of engineering; then Mr. Hill, and Sir James Anderson; and—well, let them be—we need not mention the names of all who failed in a period of fifteen or twenty years, despite the ingenuity of their mechanical arrangements. Several of the inventors produced steam-carriages capable of maintaining an average speed of ten or twelve miles an hour along turnpike-roads, and even a higher speed for short distances. Sir Charles Dance at one time resolved to try Goldsworthy Gurney's locomotive as a regular steam-stage-coach, to ply between Gloucester and Cheltenham. It went four times a day, doing the nine miles in a little under an hour. But opposition was at work; somebody laid down in a part of the road a layer of rough stones so thick as to disable the machinery; somebody laid turnpike tolls on the vehicle so heavy, that the receipts could not meet them. Mr. Gurney, not choosing to be beaten by local prejudice, succeeded in getting the House of Commons to inquire into the matter; the report of the committee, presented in eighteen hundred and thirty-one, was of a highly favourable character. It declared that carriages can be propelled by steam on common roads, at an average rate of ten miles an hour; that they can carry twelve or fourteen passengers each, at this rate; that the weight, with engine, fuel, water, and attendants, might be under three tons; that they can ascend and descend steep roads with facility; that they may be made free from annoyance to the public; that they are calculated to become speedier and cheaper than vehicles drawn by horses; and that, as the wheels have great breadth of tire, they will not injure the roads so much as narrow wheels and horses' feet.

The verdict was so good, that inventors brightened up. An excited correspondent sent to one of the journals an account of a journey he made in Captain Ogle's steam-coach from Oxford to Birmingham. "The starting from Oxford was a grand spectacle. It was St. Giles's fair-day; therefore, all the population, including thousands from the surrounding villages, thronged the streets, reminding the beholder of the multitudes at Juggernaut; whilst the ponderous machine, like that idol's car, appeared ready to crush its votaries. Care was, however, taken to make them understand the danger; and a passage being cleared, away went the splendid vehicle through Oxford city, at the rate of ten miles an hour, which, when clear of the houses, was accelerated to fourteen. Notice of the intended journey having been carried forward some days before, every town presented an appearance somewhat similar; but it was not until it reached Birmingham that real assistance, as well as applause, was required; and willingly was it granted. Just as the vehicle was entering the town, the supply of coke being exhausted, the steam dropped; and the good people, on hearing the cause, flew to the machine, and dragged it into the inn-yard of the Hen and Chickens." This vehicle of

Captain Ogle's was a kind of mail-coach in appearance, with seats for six inside passengers and eight outside; but attached to the rear was all the mechanism for providing and applying the motive power.

How they tried and tried to get the mechanism into a small compass, to do a great deal of work with a few shovels of coal, and to make the wheels take a good bite of the roads! Mr. Gurney and some moneyed friends expended thirty thousand pounds in inventing and building steam-carriages. Mr. Hancock's invention, which he modestly christened "The Infant," ran for hire as a steam-stage-coach between London and Stratford. Colonel Macerone's carriage made many trips in and around the metropolis. Mr. Russell's ran for some time between Glasgow and Paisley. At one time, a Steam Carriage and Waggon Company was started, for the application of capital on a large scale to this matter; but—perhaps luckily for the shareholders—nothing came of it except a few prospectuses and advertisements.

There are more than twenty thousand miles of turnpike-road in England and Wales; men wish to try whether steam-horses can travel on those roads, without rails. The idea is a natural one. Railways cannot penetrate to *all* towns and villages. There must, under any circumstances, be towns, nay, whole districts, left to be served by common roads. The steam-horse can do a portion of the work more quickly and effectively than the living horse. Hence the numerous inventions touched upon above, one and all of which, however, commercially failed. Sometimes, horses were frightened; sometimes, the road tolls were made enormously high; sometimes, the machines were too heavy, or the difficulty of getting water was too great. That a long steam-carriage journey *has* been made, however, we shall see.

If any people in this world were ever surprised, it must have been the Highlanders, when, five years ago, they saw the Earl of Caithness come among them in, or rather on, his steam-carriage. The earl was not his own machinist. His machine was invented by Mr. Rickett, and was intended to carry three or four persons at ten miles an hour on any ordinary road. Starting from Inverness one fine day, with his lady countess, a clergyman, and the inventor, the earl got over the first fourteen miles, to Beauly, in an hour and twenty minutes, including a few stoppages. Then, on a part of the road where he could see a long way ahead, he attained a speed of eighteen miles an hour, going up the hill and down the hill in gallant style. After a night's rest, he set off again, ascending the steep incline from Golspie to Dunrobin Castle, and thence to Holmsdale. The Ord of Caithness came next: a mountain with a road so terribly steep—one in seven for several miles—that the people made sure of the discomfiture of the noble charioteer. Not so, however; the engine panted and puffed, but did its work, and reached the summit without any stoppage. Then, the descent was made to Berridale Glen, with brakes that kept the velocity within limited bounds.

At last he entered Wick, which turned out in style. After an hour's delay, on he went again, and arrived before nightfall at Ballogell Castle, his own residence, not many miles distant from John o'Groat's. So far as we know, this is the longest journey in a steam-carriage (a hundred and fifty miles) ever made on a common road. The machine resembled a sort of hooded chaise with a small locomotive behind it, and occupied altogether about as much space as a horse and chaise. The earl took the proper driver's place, at the right hand of the front seat; the lady, we will suppose, was seated between him and the clergyman; Mr. Rickett, on a small platform in the rear, attended to the creature-comforts of the engine in the matter of coal and water. The engine carried water enough for fifteen miles, and coal for thirty. The charioteer could turn on and off the steam at pleasure, as well as work the front rudder-wheel and the brake; inasmuch that the duties of the assistant were limited to those of a stoker. The whole affair, living freight excluded, weighed a ton and a half. The puffing gave a little fright to one or two horses met on the road; but no other discomfiture occurred. During the descent to Berridale Glen, three out of the four persons alighted and walked, to lessen the impetus and aid the drag or brake.

The thing *can* be done, and possibly a commercially-profitable system may arise out of such inventions. At present, the tendency is to construct very strong vehicles that will draw heavy weights at slow speed, under circumstances that would severely test horse-flesh. Some time back a heavy marine boiler was drawn from Messrs. Laird's works at Birkenhead, to the harbour, by an engine which its inventor, Mr. Taylor, dignified with the name of a Steam-Elephant. Another of these elephants was set to work at Devonport Dockyard; a third was ordered by the Dutch government to aid in some work at Flushing. One of these monsters carries a steam crane on his back, lifts up with it ever so many tons, deposits the load in a row of trucks, and runs along merrily with the whole affair. Another inventor, his bosom swelling with praiseworthy emulation, invented a steam-bull as a competitor to the steam-elephant. One of Bray's traction engines, as these ponderous steam-carriages are now frequently called, employed to supersede or supplement hand labour at Woolwich Dockyard, on one occasion dragged about the yard one of the boilers for the Caledonia, weighing nearly thirty tons; it then wheeled itself off to the foundry, took up an armour-plate weighing seventeen tons, conveyed it to the travelling-crane, took up two more plates, and then promenaded triumphantly round the yard, turning the corners almost as easily as a perambulator. When relieved of its heavy load, this engine ran about the yard at the rate of ten miles an hour, and did all sorts of wonderful things. Another maker of these massive engines has been sending some of them out to

a mine with an unpronounceable name in South America; there were hardly any roads that horse-vehicles could traverse from the mines to the nearest navigation; and so one of these traction-engines came to the rescue, undertaking to drag ore down from the mines to the river, and to drag stores up from the river to the mines, either upon earthen trucks or corduroy roads, whichever might offer. There appears to be real usefulness in such application of steam-carriages as traction-engines, in countries having ill-formed roads; the broad wheels do not sink so deeply as the narrow wheels of ordinary vehicles or as horses' hoofs; some of them, indeed, have the wheels so peculiarly furnished with movable boards, that they would hardly sink even in a quagmire. In heavy farming operations, when the state of the fields renders it difficult for horses to pass over them, traction-engines are pointed out as being just the thing; but then it remains a problem to be solved, whether the same construction will suit soft fields and hard roads.

Four years ago the probable appearance of locomotives on turnpike-roads was so great that an act of parliament was passed to regulate them. They were to pay toll like other road vehicles; the toll to depend upon the width of the wheel, the weight resting on it, and the existence or non-existence of springs on the axle. They were not to be of greater width than seven feet, or greater weight than twelve tons, unless specially and exceptionally engaged in carrying one single monster block of stone, log of timber, cable of rope, vessel of iron, or mass of metal. They were to consume their own smoke, and to have lights in front at night. They were to have each its commander-in-chief, in the shape of a driver, together with a stoker and a guard. They were not to be used on suspension-bridges without the special consent of the owners, and not on any bridges or roads which the Secretary of State might deem unsuitable. They were never to exceed a speed of ten miles an hour on any public highway, or five miles in towns or villages.

One would have thought these restrictions severe enough. Ministers, however, were besieged in parliament with queries and complaints about these dreadful monsters which sometimes frightened Belgravia and all its horses and all its men; and hence, after much battling, a further legislative settlement of the matter.

How, and where, and when, and under what regulations, we may now work locomotives in the streets and on the roads is all laid down in the act of parliament. We must have three persons to attend to each monster, to command and stoke and steer; to ease her and stop her and put her astern; if there be any waggons or carriages drawn by the machine, there must be one person additional to attend to them. We must have one man, either inclusive or exclusive of those here denoted, to act the part of a running-footman; he must walk or run in front of the locomotive, at least

sixty yards in advance of it; he shall carry a red flag constantly displayed, shall warn riders and drivers of the approach of the monster, and shall assist them if the horses become troubled by the apparition and its snorting. We must not use any steam-whistle, or blow off steam in such a way as to make much noise. We must stop the monster whenever the running-footman gives a signal for so doing. We must have two lights at night, one on each side. We must not travel on turnpike-roads more rapidly than four miles an hour, or in the streets of towns more than two miles an hour. We may weigh as much as fourteen tons, and may be nine feet wide, if used on a turnpike-road in country districts; but the municipal or corporate authorities in any town may determine at what hours the locomotives may run through the streets of that town, and under what detailed conditions.

Of course steam-omnibuses are out of the question now. Two miles an hour will not do even for the slowest of slow-going people. And these land-steamers must have a healthy constitution if they survive certain other conditions imposed upon them in this statute. It may be that the legislature is a little too restrictive. We shall see.

"INCONSOLABLE."

I AM waiting on the margin
Of the dark cold rushing tide;
All I love have pass'd before me,
And have reach'd the other side:
Only unto me a passage
Through the waters is denied.

Mist and gloom o'erhang the river,
Gloom and mist the landscape veil;
Straining for the shores of promise,
Sight and hope and feeling fail;
Not a sigh, a breath, a motion,
Answers to my feeble wail.

Surely they have all forgot me
'Mid the wonders they have found
In the far enchanted mansions;
Out of heart, and sight, and sound,
Here I sit, like Judah's daughters,
Desolate upon the ground.

Strangers' feet the stream are stemming,
Stranger faces pass me by,
Willing some, and some reluctant,
All have leave to cross but I—
I, the hopeless, all bereaved,
Loathing life, that long to die!

Be the river ne'er so turbid,
Chill and angry, deep and drear,
All my loved ones are gone over,
Daunted not by doubt or fear;
And my spirit reaches after,
While I sit lamenting here.

Happy waters that embraced them,
Happier regions hid from sight,
Where my keen, far-stretching vision,
Dazed and baffled, lost them quite.
Dread, immeasurable distance
'Twixt the darkness and the light!

And I know that never, never,
Till this weak, repining breast
Still its murmurs into patience,
Yonder from the region blest
Shall there break a streak of radiance,
And upon the river rest.

I shall hail the mystic token
Bright'ning all the waters o'er,
Struggle through the threat'ning torrent
Till I reach the further shore,
Wonder then, my blind eyes open'd,
That I had not trusted more.

JUGLINI'S CHAMPION CIRCUS.

PLEASANT shows of junior days, from the credulous pre-historic era of childhood, come back from the past for a few moments like a dream! For, of course, now there are no such things as spiritual angels, all stars and floating clouds, or noble men, miracles of strength and beauty, exact exemplars of the gods in the mythology, whose achievements we were then learning (by heart, question and answer) from Baxter's Heathen Mythology. Now we only know dragged girls with very washed-out cheeks, and the miracles of strength and beauty are dirty men with blue much-scraped cheeks, greasy hats, and little linen. There is no glory, no halo, no transfiguration, in the shows. We want the faith.

We can look at it in another way, though with a more practical and earthly view. Thus only yesterday I saw a dead wall newly become a live wall, with bills and posters printed in green and crimson, and further, swarming like a prairie with countless coloured horses flying here and there, and graceful creatures, apparently new from the garden of the first transgression, leaping, soaring, springing, swooping, and fluttering. This, of course, means that "Juglini's Champion Circus" will make triumphant entry on Monday next. It is disrespect to the neighbourhood to find that these bills and posters are mere forms, with the date of arrival filled in in MS., so that, by this economy, the one pattern does for every village and every town. It suggests a feeling of personal *cheapness*.

I wonder (still reading on, though more or less humiliated) what gentleman on the staff undertakes the composition of the Bills! Not the proprietor—Juglini himself—I am sure: *he* is invariably a gross earthy man, with an eye to business and horses, to his men and women, but not to literature. I say advisedly—looking at the aim for which they were intended, *quâ* bills—they are admirable. I confess with shame that, having a certain practice in writing in English, I could no more do it than I could ride on one of Juglini's barebacked coursers. Hopelessly behind *all* scenes as I feel now—not to be entranced by anything in the Show department—I confess to being seduced by these posters on a humble wall in a humble corner of the empire. It actually stirs me as I read, and kindles a kind of sham enthusiasm.

Juglini's is the Excelsior Troupe of Europe, renowned over the various courts of the Continent for "the easy grace and *perfect nonchalance* of its gymnastic and antipodean professors." I delight in the choice of that word *nonchalance*—perfect *nonchalance*—and read it over very often, for it does express the bearing of the professors most accurately. So, too, with "the wrestling youths of Corinth" (which touches a chord somewhere), and the exploits of that unflinching hero, who belongs, I remark, to every Excelsior troupe. I mean the strong gentleman with the rosy muscles well developed through fleshings, who comes in as much unadorned as possible; no sky-blue trunks or silver fillets—nothing but nature, sir, strength, sir, and a whip. So, too, with his "coal-black steed," set off with white leather trappings, and girthed tight in all directions. One must feel a pardonable curiosity to see this gentleman on "his rampant charger in rapid gyrations." But we must be dead to all the feelings of a man not to have a positive yearning to look on the lovely Miss Rosa Clare, as she appears "in her richness of classical beauty," and, adds the bill, breaking into verse,

"These lovely women in their pride
Show strength and beauty well allied!"

And yet who knows but Madame Juglini, wife of the proprietor, in her feats of the "haute école and simple ménage," may have equal claims? And yet, with all these united charms, which have justly raised this troupe to the dignity of the Excelsiors before all the leading courts of Europe, "there will be no addition to the original charges for the superbly cushioned front seats at two shillings, boxes one shilling, and galleries sixpence and threepence."

I was lucky enough to see the triumphal entry—the band in the Olympic car leading, the Olympic car driven by Juglini himself, and drawn by eight matchless steeds. Juglini's hands are positively filled with a mass of complicated reins, with which he goes through enormous shifting and manipulation, as if he were gigantically playing at cat's-cradle; and yet, taken as mere driving, the task must be tolerably easy, for there is a groom at the head of each horse. Wonderful are the equestrian bands; and they certainly give more for their hire in the articles of piano, drum, and trombone, than any other music.

The Olympic car has a swan at one end, the gilding of whose feathers has been much rubbed away. Then follows a waggnette with members of the company; then the ladies, each with a "cavalier:" each lady in a blue or pink riding-habit, and a hat and white feather, but not certainly in a certain "richness of their classic beauty," which may be kept exclusively for the night, and the "scenes in the circle." The "cavaliers" are very dingy men, with an air of dyeing and cleaning about their hats and coats. But they ride with peerless grace, and talk with "easy nonchalance"

to the maidens in blue and pink. It is impossible to distinguish the strong man by his apparent strength, which is not apparent in his day-suit; and I should like to have pointed out to me the three side-splitting English clowns, and the "grotesque comique," "le petit Jacques." There is no gathering this from the faces of the artists.

There must be a charm, an air of gipsy encampment, in this driving and riding from place to place! Of course, when the foray is made on the greater towns, the matter becomes simple and prosaic. The "fiery-trained barbs," and the Olympic waggon, band, &c., are all put into horse-boxes, second-class carriages, and thus transported. But in the rural districts it is different. Once, in Wales, along a most charming road that overhangs the Menai Straits, and which leads from Bangor to Beaumaris, I met the whole troupe, "Swabey's Globe and Mammoth Troupe," cantering on to their next station. A more cheerful party could not be conceived. The Olympic car was there; and the "strong man," and the antipodean professors, and the "ladies" of the troupe, were crowded into it and "lunching." Some were riding the fiery barbs, which were dappled and piebalded most mysteriously. A minor Olympic car was laden with strange framework, which I found later expand into the "cushioned boxes, price two shillings," the monster pavilion of dingy canvas travelling on before. I learned from an expert that the whole monster pavilion, "comfortably cushioned front seats" and all, only took two or three hours to set up, and an hour or so to "strike." But when a little private "wan" came up, with a green door, brass knocker, and cabin windows, with muslin curtains à la Jarley, which "wobbled" along a little uneasily (and a funnel at the back), I felt a yet greater desire to be one of them. Madame Swabey herself was looking out of the cabin window. Before evening they would have pitched the "pavillon monstre" in a cozy field outside this queer Welsh town, Beaumaris; the Swabey children would have been put to bed in the Jarley "wan," while Swabey himself and Madame Swabey would have quarters in a second-class inn of the little old town.

The sensation, I suspect, must be nearly akin to that of going in a yacht. They touch, in their equestrian way, at nearly as many places. They can see the country as if they were tourists. The whole has an air of elegant vagabondage.

When the night comes on, and the "monstre" tent is up, and the huge gas-ring blazing, when the elegantly stuffed front seats at two shillings are well filled, and the big drum is pounding and thundering away, the whole has an inviting and festive air. The rustics crowd in. If you yourself are in the little village or hamlet, from pleasure or necessity, you will find it hard to resist. The roars of laughter, the sudden cessation of band and drum, their resumption of work almost as sudden, the applause—all these sounds, coming

through canvas, invite the stranger. Madame Juglini takes the money and gives tickets. She has a much better business head than Juglini himself. What conservatives are these equestrians! The tradition never seems to fade. The old dishes are always served, and yet they do not pall.

As I enter and take my position on a superbly stuffed front seat (2s.), I find I am just in time for an old conservative "act;" for actually the lady is standing on a flat saddle on a very "blooming" bay, and, holding a whip over her head, now "ducking" into a kneeling position, now shooting up into the "first position;" now she changes with a little jump to this side, now to that; now she is on her knees; now she twists a pink scarf about her. All this is familiar—so familiar, especially at the end, when the steed, who has been going at an easy and rhythmical canter, "blowing" very hard all the time, breaks into a swift gallop. Then the gentleman walking round in the middle cracks his whip hard, and the young lady, "in her richness of beauty," leans inward—in a manner alarming to everybody but natural philosophers, who know that it is the effect of centrifugal force—while the "richness of beauty" seems to grow excited and utter frantic sounds like "Hup, hup!" the steed finally stopping very short, blowing very hard, and his rider dropping into a sitting attitude on his back, "blowing" herself a little, and with her muslin all up to her shoulders.

In the circus of a higher school, and conducted on the French system, the gentlemen who wear blue-buttoned semi-military frocks and a gold band down their trousers, and who walk round and round in the middle, trailing their whips in the sawdust, are worthy of all study; especially in the manner in which they never take their eyes off the steed for a moment. They are elegant men as a class, and have an air of diplomacy about them, and, in the conversations they hold, *their* part has certainly all the refinement and polish. Not so much can be said on the other side, though those "inimitable children of Momus," the side-splitters, Roberts and Williams, the well-known English clowns, do their best. I mark the distinction, "English clown," for there is a difference in their humour: the "grotesque comique" being more spiritual, if I may use the term, in his conceits. Between these brothers in art there is no love lost. But the two English humorists have to put up with French freedoms, the "petit grotesque comique" being quite at home with the audience, chattering pleasantly, pulling away chairs from under Messrs. Brown and Roberts in earnest, and exposing those gentlemen to jeers and a serious loss of personal dignity. Their looks of fury, seen struggling through white lead and streaks of vermilion, were highly diverting. Yet Brown had his merits, and I own to the recollection of some laughter at his exertions, which is what few clowns can hope to extort now. When a sort of platform was carried in by the showy grooms

of the establishment—fancy ourselves going out for a ride, with one of these retainers to hold our barb!—and Brown stood up on it as a candidate on the hustings to ask the suffrages of the audience, and grew gradually so passionately earnest and animated as to become purposely unintelligible, his words sputtering out one on top of the other, and sometimes no words at all, and swung his arms and wagged his head, I confess it was a laughter-moving exhibition. His enigmas and bons-mots were *not*, strictly speaking, of the first order. As, for instance, when the lady in the richness of her classic beauty was resting on her horse, Brown would address the gentleman with the whip and with the gold band down his trousers: “I say, sir! Mr. Coleman, sir!” “Well, sir, Mr. Brown, what can I do for you?” “Yes, sir.” “I say, what can I do for you?” “I was thinking, Mr. Coleman.” “Oh, you were thinking! Indeed, Mr. Brown; you had better take a chair, and rest yourself after that exertion.” “I was thinking, Mr. Coleman, why it was that you were such a favourite with the ladies.” “Why I am such a favourite with the ladies of the audience?” “Yes, of the audience. Because—because you have such a command over *the ring*.” In a second, Mr. Coleman gives him a severe “cut” on the leg, which causes Brown to leap into the air with a cry of assumed agony. The mottled charger begins to get into motion, the band strikes up, the paper hoops are brought, Mr. Brown walks round diligently behind Mr. Coleman, a seager not to lose sight of the horse for a moment.

I recollect poor Brown turning up later, in a great city, at a great circus, which was Mammoth, or Monster, or Excelsior—or perhaps all three. After delighting us night after night for a season of at least three months, the last night came, when Brown was to have his benefit. I recal the invitations:

“Come early! The side-splitting Joe Brown! Recollect Thursday.”

On this occasion Joe was to throw his “famed double summersault” from the top gallery to the stage. Joe, always provident and thrifty, brought about with him a set of stencil plates, with which an emissary went round privily during the night, and, aided by a pot of red paint, covered the bridges and smooth walls with fiery impressions of

GO AND SEE JOE BROWN.

I was very near going myself and seeing Joe Brown in this his last appearance—for so it proved. He had a bumper. Some were uncharitable enough to say he had had another bumper first. Others who attended him to the gallery before he started said he was nervous. But he was an Englishman, and resolved to go through with what he had promised. He’d like, he said, to see “Froggy” put to a thing of that sort; for to the end he cherished a fine and healthy animosity towards that alien. The poor wretch, as we learned next morning, had miscalculated, and performed but

a summersault and three-quarters, or had made some such mistake, and came with a terrible crash on his neck or head, which he fractured, dying in an hour or so. That was years and years ago; but to this hour, not quite effaced, we can read the red letters on the bridge, like a fatal handwriting on the wall, “GO AND SEE JOE BROWN.”

The approach of the benefit does somehow seem to betray our British clown into extravagance. On these festivals he is privileged to go through any sort of saturnalia. Was it Joe Brown who used to give away “a splendid pig” on this favoured night? It was *not* Joe Brown, but a “brother of Momus,” far before his time, who consecrated the day by appearing on the river of the great city, where the show was going on, in a washing-tub drawn by six geese—a most singular spectacle, which, I well remember, drew the whole town, obstructing thoroughfares, lining the river, &c. It was to me the most bitter disappointment that I could not see the exciting pageant; for the strong men, the coalmen, bargemen, and so forth, blocked up all the good points of view. But, by the roars of laughter, I knew that the procession was paddling down the river. One greater roar, and a sound of distant flopping and splashing, told the attentive world that an accident had occurred—that the tub, whose delicate balance a breath would disturb, had turned over, and that the brother of Momus was entangled among his geese.

See now the swing doors or gates of the circus flung dashing open by a gaudy groom, who leaps out of the way, and a fiery steed comes plunging in! After the fiery steed, an officer in the uniform of the French service. He is welcomed with applause, and deserves it. He leaps on the steed’s back, and sets him in motion with a “Hup! hup!” and an up and down dancing movement. This is the sort of thing I like, and I know what is to come—pretty nearly, at least. An assistant in the middle of the arena, with a heap of clothes at his feet, aids the spectacle. He tosses his friend the great tricolor flag and a sword. See what graceful gestures! Now he is on one knee, letting the folds of the flag droop over him; now he is doing cut and thrust, and sorely pressed. (This is Ridley Ryder, whose *spécialité* is *equestrian delineation*.) Have we not wits, and does not the meanest-witted among us recognise THE HERO OF LONDŌ? In short, we are assisting at stages of the immortal conqueror of the world, and this is the first stage. More riding round. The man tosses up more clothes—rich gorgeous velvet and ermine, and a wreath of laurel. It must be very difficult to dress on horseback, but perhaps more difficult to dress when in the usual riding attitude of common life. Ridley Ryder is quite at home. There he is as he appeared crowned at Notre-Dame. Nothing can be more dexterous than the way in which the imperial sceptre, ball, and other parapher-

nalía, are tossed up to and caught by the flying emperor. Again he is throwing off his imperial robes contemptuously into the middle of the sawdust, and is dressing—the boots, the white waistcoat, the breeches, the flowing redingote, and the little low cocked-hat. We all know that picture; and when a glass is tossed up to him, and he folds his arms and scans the field narrowly, we all burst into applause and hail him as Napoleon at WATERLOO.

It was wonderful, the way he worked it up. Now, his brow grew lowering and gloomy, and his head sank on his breast: by which we knew the day to be going against him; now, he pointed; now, he turned round and searched the field towards the horse's tail, striving to pierce through the smoke. But it was easy to read in that massive face and lowering brow, that all was over. It was time to think of retreat. Some one tosses him his cloak; some one else, the gentleman with the gold band down his trousers, touches up the horse, who begins to gallop furiously, his nostrils out and quivering, his tail streaming in air. The conqueror of the world is flying from the fatal field of Waterloo. "Ils sont mêlés ensemble," I hear him say—that is in my mind's ear, Horatio, because I have a suspicion that our Corsican's acquaintance with either history or French, is too limited to have enabled him to make such a remark. In fact, I *do* catch a remark of the Corsican's as he whirled away by me, which is a muttered and impatient "Gee up!" No wonder he is eager to get away from such horrors! His faithful Garde shot down in masses, &c. Tremendous speed now! Horse and rider lean in centrifugally. The Corsican is down on one knee, is up again with legs astride, is now standing with his back to the horse's head—an attitude, I am afraid, not sanctioned by the imperial tradition. The pace is terrific. The Prussians are coming, perhaps? No; he is saved! For the horse pulls up suddenly, and the conqueror of the world leaps down into the sawdust, much out of breath, bows twice, and goes off ingloriously to St. Helena in the stables and dressing-rooms.

To this hour, who will not find entertainment in Richard Turpin's ride to York—Turpin by Mr. Hedges, the famous Black Bess by his famous mare, Cleopatra?

It is positively inspiring—I mean, the chase, which is a real chase—for I can see that the members of the troupe enter into the spirit of the thing. Hark to the hollow sound of Cleopatra's hoofs echoing against the sides of the circus! Wonderful are the turnpike-gates, which, strange to say, are carried in bodily by men of the establishment, and set up in a moment, in defiance of law and parliament, but which makes no difference in the world to Cleopatra and her rider, who clear them in splendid style, and which then with equal promptitude are carried off by their own gatekeeper. The death of the noble mare is truly pathetic, when

her prostrate form is brought in on a large board, carried by all the grooms of the establishment. There seems a sort of propriety in this, though we can hardly reason about it; and, indeed, if we consult Mr. Ainsworth's existing history, it may be doubted if sanction could be found there for the board. Yet it seems highly natural, and the spectacle of the grooms' affecting grief, and of Turpin himself making frantic gestures of bereavement, and of the fast glazing eye of the dying mare (which I could see wandering to the bit of carrot in her master's hand), made a most pathetic spectacle.

We were led to expect great things from Juglini in the way of rope-dancing, and were eager to see Mons. Bocquet, who had received a medal from the President of the Argentine Republic. These were high testimonials, and the gaudy grooms taking about twenty minutes to set up Mons. Bocquet's apparatus, and hauling on at the ropes like tars, worked us all into a fever. Mons. Bocquet himself rather disappointed me as to physique; for the bills had spoken of his "elegant saltimbanque feats and graceful poetry of the human form." But the human form as here exhibited was very stout and burly, displaying a sort of French swolleness, with a distressing double chin. Without wishing to throw doubt upon the President of the Argentine Republic, we were inclined to suspect that the president who conferred that medal must have been long since interred with all republican funeral honours; for Mons. Bocquet seemed to have passed the age of sixty a long time. It was wonderful, all he did. He had his pole. It required a great deal to satisfy him about the safety of the rope, and he made the grooms "haul on" several times. Then he stepped on the rope cautiously, as if he were going into water. All the "acts" consisted chiefly of little short jumps up and down, changing his feet carefully. But he had to turn the wonderful summersault, and he put it off as long as he could. The first time was a sad failure, as he alighted awkwardly, and tottered and staggered, and, at last, had to leap down to the sawdust to save himself from a fall. We all applauded as he tried again, which he did after many execrations, in his native tongue, on the rope and on the grooms. We could hear those gentry, as they were made to "haul on" again, speaking of the artist, not respectfully. "Rope's always wrong. Old Bokey's getting shakey." Thus they spake. Mons. Bocquet, all this time much oppressed by the exertion and the burden of his own person, was breathing and blowing in sad distress, while his soles were being chalked. *There* was the fault too. Now, at last, he was ready to try again. The rope was better, but scarcely satisfactory. He does it this time—staggering a great deal as he alights, but his pole stands true to him, and he has *not* to leap down into the sawdust. We all applauded. Still, it could scarcely be for *that* performance that the President had conferred the medal. I could read this doubt in the eyes of many.

I could linger long on this subject of Juglini. Not a word has been said of the lovely woman in the hat and riding-habit, who came in on the "exquisitely trained roan mare," STAR OF THE POLES, to show what the "haute école" could do. How she valed, and galoped, and twisted, and turned, and put her fore-foot up on a table (I speak of the roan mare here; not the lovely woman), and picked up a handkerchief, would be long to relate in detail. Suffice it to say, when about half-past ten the orchestra struck up our dear National Anthem, which makes every English heart thrill, and look for its hat, and think how the carriage is to be got up, we all departed from the tent, much satisfied with our night and Juglini's Champion Circus.

A MERE SCRATCH.

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS. CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE report of that active intelligence, Will Crooke, to his colonel of the proceedings at Gosling Graize was strictly true, only falling short of reality in regard to the stormy character of the conference that followed Lord Haughfield's appearance on the scene. The temper of this noble person, never of the sweetest, was not improved by his compulsory jaunt of two hundred miles, nor by the unpromising aspect of affairs on his arrival. Thus, instead of temporising with his young connexion (George was by many years his junior), he gave such free expression to his own personal displeasure at the proposed match, that George, in his turn losing self-government, cut the matter short by declaring his intention irrevocable, and refused to hear another word on the subject. Swelling with rage and disappointment, Lord Haughfield would have ordered his horses, and departed on the spot—vowing that nothing on earth should induce him to taste food prepared by the hands of the future Lady Gosling's aunt—but for George's promise that this difficulty should be obviated by borrowing a neighbour's French cook. It needed all Clara's tact and eloquence to bring about an armistice which should save appearances, and subsist at all events till the following morning, when the visitors might depart in peace.

George was now alone, but far from happy. He was fond of his sister, and had secretly relied upon her for the re-establishment of good relations with his proud and sensitive brother-in-law, should these be disturbed by his projected marriage. But Clara had imbibed something of her lord's family pride, and this, added to the abrupt manner in which the news (which, she justly felt, should have come from her brother himself) had been conveyed to her, arrayed her feelings against him. He must fight it out alone.

And horribly alone he felt. The prospect of long months of this mental solitude, uncheered by the presence of her upon whom every thought of his heart was now unalterably fixed, almost made him frantic. A fever of impa-

tience possessed him, to which neither solitude nor society seemed to offer any effectual relief. One thing was very certain, he could not wear out this weary interval at Gosling Graize. What if he should travel a little? George went to bed, thinking of Italy.

He was awakened by a cry of alarm and horror uttered by his own lips. He had had a frightful dream. Esther, her fair face torn and disfigured by the fangs of the rabid Swartz, appeared to him engaged in desperate conflict with the furious animal, and shrieking for aid. The vision was so real that he had risen and set foot on the floor before he was convinced of the illusion. In certain conditions of mind, things that might else pass for no more than their actual value, exercise a morbid tyranny over the reason and judgment. This dream, in George's mind, connected itself with evil of some kind impending over Esther. In vain he strove with the sinister presentiment. In vain he busied himself with travelling preparations. A conviction fastened upon his mind that to quit her now would be to bid her an eternal farewell. At length he took the resolution to write to her one passionate appeal, in which, after describing the doubt and trouble that possessed him, he implored her to abandon, for his sake, the interval of delay for which she had stipulated, and accompany him to Italy as his bride.

While waiting her reply, George occupied himself with the arrangements rendered necessary by what would, in any case, be a prolonged absence from home. He took measures for selling his horses and reducing his establishment. Mrs. Mapes, the housekeeper, rendered totally ineffective by continued rheumatism, had resigned; and this circumstance had made it imperative that good Mrs. Turnover should, for the present, retain office, although George, who, in the altered aspect of affairs, disliked to see her in a menial capacity, would have preferred to have her remove at once to a pleasant and commodious cottage he had purchased at the pretty village of Rosedale, whither he hoped Esther would come to join her.

There was nothing now to prevent this arrangement being carried out, and George, after waiting several days in vain for an answer to his letter, determined to quit Gosling Graize on the morrow.

He shook hands cordially with Mrs. Turnover.

"I trust you will find everything to your satisfaction, my good old friend," said George, "and that—that your niece may be persuaded to abandon her teaching and come to learn—learn housekeeping, I mean, under your able tuition, at Rosedale. Thus I shall perhaps see you both before I begin my travels."

Mrs. Turnover was in tears; she didn't know why; she always did cry when people went abroad. It seemed to imply a range and time of immense magnitude and duration.

"Wishing you the best of 'elth and sperrets, sir," sobbed the good lady; "and, if I

may be so bold, don't go nowhere, 'specially up hill, without a sangwidge in each pocket. Did I ever tell you, when you was a boy, them words of Mr. Turnover? They was his last."

"His *very* last?" asked George, suspiciously.

"Well, sir, he'd been silent so long, that we thought he was actially gone; and the nuss, which had been promised another job, wanted to put him in the coffin he'd ordered for himself some days before, when, while we was arguin', T. opens one eye and crooks his little finger, which meant 'Lift me up and give me a tablespoonful of gruel, not too hot, with half a dozen drops of brandy in it.' That was giv', and he says, 'Don't cheat your stomachich. Heat horden and 'artily. If I'd heat a sangwidge every twenty minutes since I was five year old, I'd 'ave been an 'elthy individual now. Adoo!'"

Mrs. Turnover bobbed and departed.

Little slept the young master of the house that night. As he flung open the casement and welcomed the dawn, a fancy seized him to visit the rose-pleasance where he had first heard that haunting voice that now seemed for ever speaking to his soul. Autumn was now well advanced. Not a rose was to be seen, but George could have picked out the very tree by which Esther had stood—almost the very thorn by which she had been wounded—and, with the idle fancy peculiar to lovers and lunatics, snipped off the spray, thorns and all, and put it in his button-hole! Sitting in the bower from which he had issued to surprise the trespasser, he strove to conjure up the fairy face, and, having done so, fell into a reverie gloomier than ever. He knew that, in writing to her as he had done, he had broken the compact they had made, and her silence (for this was the fifth day) led him seriously to fear that she would act upon her threat and consider their intercourse as at an end.

The sound of the little gate opening disturbed his meditations. Mr. Fanshaw with the postbag. The butler announced that breakfast was on the table.

"In half an hour," said George. "I will read my letters here."

His eye had already detected a strange handwriting. It was a firm, fair hand, an Esther-like hand. He hesitated for an instant, then tore it open, and with a glance devoured the contents, which were of the briefest.

The blood flew to his forehead.

"She is *mine*!" he exclaimed, clasping the letter aloft in his exulting hands.

To explain this satisfactory result, we must return for a moment to Esther herself.

When that inflexible young lady went back to her no sinecure at Mrs. Grumble's, she did so with the full intention of peremptorily dismissing from her mind all such recent recollections as were at all likely to interfere with the performance of her accustomed duties. Finding, however, that these comprised every word and incident that in the remotest degree

connected themselves with her late visit to Gosling Graize, Esther next wisely determined to regard the whole merely as a beatific vision, which might, or might not, have reference to some future event, but by no means justified an abiding contemplation. And such an anomaly is woman's mind, that the calm and unimaginative Esther almost brought herself to believe that she had been the victim of an illusion! A glance at her wounded hand, however, always restored the reality.

"What do you look at your hand so often for, Miss Vann?" said little Maud Grumble. "Is it—O Miss Vann, how bad!"

"Nonsense, dear, it's nothing. A mere scratch," replied Esther, mechanically putting it to her lips.

But Maud's exclamation had attracted the rest, who came clustering round, to examine the hurt.

"What a long scratch! Does it pain you still, dear?" asked her eldest pupil.

"Not at all. I like it. I love it!" replied Esther, impatiently.

"Like a scratch?" chorused the wondering circle.

"What did I say? You are making me talk nonsense, I think," said the young governess. "Go on with your lesson, Maud. The products of Staffordshire are—"

But little people are observant; and that brief dialogue, and the wound that was "liked," were not forgotten.

This story must be frankly told. Poor Esther, despite her gallant struggle to regain her usual course of thought and duty, was destined to fail. One haunting doubt, that nothing could exorcise, presented itself more and more, infesting even her innocent dreams, so that she would awake under the consciousness, as it were, of some accusation to which she could oppose no sufficient answer. Suppose, something whispered, George's lost love has repented of her precipitancy, and learned with bitter remorse that her heart was all his own? Suppose that this fact should be made known to George? Would it revive the sentiments so long cherished, so lately overcome? Could she put faith in her lover's present feelings? Nay, ought he to rely upon his own? Even if it were so, had she, Esther, acted honourably in assisting to neutralise all hope of a reconciliation between persons separated only by the caprice of one?

This state of doubt and perplexity began to influence her bodily health. Headaches (to which she had hitherto been a stranger), and a strange nervousness, with accelerated pulse and other feverish symptoms, at times assailed her. In spite of every effort at self-control, she found herself becoming captious, irritable, impatient. This cost the poor girl many penitent tears, and weeping renewed her headache, until she gave herself up to the doubtful comfort of gazing upon the "mere scratch," which had long since healed, by way of balm to the still open and far more dangerous wound within.

Such a condition of things could not be favourable to the progress of Grumble education. Mr. and Mrs. Grumble, though good-hearted people in their way, had been trained in the comfortless school of genteel poverty. By pinching alone could they maintain what they conceived to be their social status. Hence they had not hesitated to avail themselves of the services of Esther, both as nurse and governess, for their six children, without other remuneration than her board and lodging. They knew that, save for her worthy aunt, Mrs. Turnover, Esther was without friends capable of assisting her, and kept the secret of their jewel governess so tightly, that I, am sorry to say, when once an opportunity presented itself of placing Esther in a far superior position, Mrs. Grumble so successfully under-estimated her governess's acquirements as to retain her in the family. Of this circumstance Miss Vann had been somehow made aware. But warmly attached to her pupils, and content with the personal kindness she received from her employers, she had willingly remained in the position in which we found her.

"Do you know, Grumble, I am not quite pleased with Esther of late?" said Mrs. G. to her lord. "Ever since her last visit to her Aunt Turnover, when she stopped away all night without my leave, she has been like a changed girl. I am afraid she neglects the children."

"Ha! why do you think so, my dear?" inquired Mr. Grumble, with whom Esther was rather a favourite.

"I've had it on my mind some time," said the lady, "and to-day I examined them all. They have not advanced one bit. Margaret's still in simple long division; Maud insisted that Dublin was the capital of North Wales; and Tommy had a theory that eggs were the invention of Christopher Columbus, when straitened for provisions while looking for the pole. I shall speak very seriously to Esther on the subject."

"Of the egg, my dear? And 'seriously'?" It is more than I would promise to do," said her husband, laughing. "But," he added, "do you think that Esther is quite well? She has looked queerly at times. Besides, she is a good girl, and remember, mamma, we don't pay her a princely salary!"

"We give her all she wants, and we treat her as an equal, which is more than they would do at any of your great houses," returned the lady; "and she ought to do her duty by us accordingly."

"—*Ly*, my love," put in Mr. Grumble, who, since Esther had been in the house, had grown particular in his grammar. "Well, so she ought. Give her a jog, if you like, just to keep her up to the collar, you know, that's all."

On the day that witnessed this conversation, headache, and that strange sense of uneasiness before alluded to, had compelled poor Esther to seek her own chamber, where she sat with flushed and burning cheeks, striving vainly to compose her troubled thoughts. She no longer

attempted to disguise from herself the strength of the feeling that possessed her. She loved with a wild ineradicable love, the depths of which she dared not fathom. But, *he*?—

"I—I cannot bear this," she gasped, with a choking sob that seemed to give her pain. "Is it—is it real? Dare I believe him? Oh, if he cannot love me, let me die!"

"Miss Vann! Esther! A letter for you, dear," said a small voice outside the bolted door, and the missive was skillfully passed under it, the bearer skipping away.

Esther snatched it from the ground. It was not a short letter; but the contents appeared to be comprehended at a glance.

It was her lover's letter, coming like an answer to her prayer. Enough to say that George had set forth, with all the illogical but convincing arguments true passion will suggest, the reasons that existed for a speedy termination of the present condition of suspense. He implored her to place herself under the affectionate care of her only relative, in the home he had provided for the latter, to permit him to visit her there, and to sanction the preparations for their union at the earliest moment to which his prayers might induce her to accede.

Thereupon began a fresh tumult in her soul. Despite its passion, there was apparent in George's letter an honest truth, before which all doubts dwindled, and dispersed to air. The temptation to listen to his pleading was strong, while her own heart ceased not to whisper: "Yield, yield; what would you more?" On the other hand, her sense of delicacy recoiled from the suddenness of the step. Their slight and recent acquaintance, still more the fact of his having so lately stood in the same relation towards another, demanded delay. She would pause upon it, and might Heaven direct her judgment right!

Her meditations were interrupted by a tap at the door, just sufficiently imperious to denote the mistress of the house. Placing the letter in her bosom, Esther hastened to admit her.

"Oh, we feared that you were unwell," began Mrs. Grumble; "but you are really looking better than usual. So I may say, without fear of increasing your indisposition, what I came about. Your care of the children, Miss Vann, has considerably relaxed of late."

"Ma'am," faltered Esther, conscious that the charge was not entirely without foundation.

"This must be amended, child," said Mrs. Grumble, coldly pursuing her advantage.

"I—I have not been quite myself lately," replied Esther, pressing her hot hand upon her brow.

"I have just made the remark that you look even better than usual," said Mrs. Grumble, stately. "I will thank you not to contradict me, Miss Vann." (Esther curtsied.) "I do not wish for any words with you. I have merely to remind you that, in return for the peculiar advantages you enjoy, in being at all times treated as a member of my family, I have a right to expect that your undivided interest and

attention be centred in my children. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, ma'am," said Esther; "and I have to thank you for this most opportune visit, which has enabled me to decide upon a point of distressing difficulty. I am going to leave you."

"How! *What!* leave me, child?" exclaimed the alarmed lady. "Whither could you go?"

"*Not* to Mrs. Margesson's," said Esther, quietly. (The name brought a slight colour into Mrs. Grimble's cheek.) "I am going to my aunt, who is now residing at Rosedale."

"And—and the child—Nonsense, Esther. I was only joking."

"I am *not*," said Esther, steadily. "I should not hold such jesting fair. I love your children, and am indebted to you, and even more to Mr. Grimble, for an amount of kindness not always shown even to those who can give something in return. But my mind is made up. I will remain, however, for a few days, if you think fit, that my pupils may not be deprived of such inefficient teaching as I can still afford; for, indeed," added Esther, rather appealingly, "I am not so well as you persist in believing."

Poor Mrs. Grimble was fain to accept this concession, and the interview terminated, leaving on her hands the unpleasant duty of informing her husband that not only had Miss Vann refused to be kept "up to the collar," but had slipped out of it altogether.

Rosedale, whither the last scene of this strange eventful history conducts us, was a pretty sequestered village, in and around which more than one of George's ancestors had held property. Hence, though it was somewhat nearer to The Haie than George would have preferred—about four miles—he had selected it as an eligible residence for his faithful old servant, and provided her with the prettiest cottage-dwelling in the district. Everything requisite for comfort—even many elegances—had been liberally supplied; for George trusted it might prove the temporary nest of a brighter bird than she whom he sent forward to prepare the way.

He was not disappointed. Esther came; and the third meeting in the world of these singular lovers took place in the little pleasure George had caused to be planted, regardless of expense, in imitation of that at The Graize. Happy beyond expression, they lingered in the autumn-tinted wood-walks, or sat beside the chattering brook, while Mrs. Turnover, in her glory, superintended the preparation of those marriage garments, &c., to which her darling could be prevailed upon to give but slight attention.

Esther's new-found peace seemed to impart a new beauty to her charming features; but there were still times when the feverish flush would reappear, and a quickened pulse and glistening eye indicated some morbid action lurking in her sensitive system.

One day, when George, who had been absent a little longer than usual, meeting her in her walk, leaped from his horse, and clasped her

hand, she gave a little involuntary cry of pain. George eagerly inquired the cause, and, in doing so, noticed the peculiar feverish and excited expression we have mentioned.

He learned that she had yesterday struck her hand accidentally against a bookcase, exactly upon the scar left by the rose-thorn at Gosling Graize. It had given her more pain than was easy to be accounted for, seeing that that famous wound had long since healed; and, besides an extreme tenderness on the spot itself, she had since suffered from severe shooting pains, following the direction of the surrounding nerves, up to the very shoulder and neck.

George looked at the scar. It was no longer white, but a dark livid red, and that not only at the seat of the recent bruise, but throughout its entire length.

"My darling, this must be looked to," he said. "The blow has touched a nerve. This terrible wound! When will it cease to reproach me, I wonder?" He kissed it softly as he spoke.

"Do you know that even the touch of your lips gives me a twinge of pain?" said Esther, laughing. "But, what matters, dear? After all, a mere scratch!"

George lingered long that day, as if he could not tear himself from the side of his betrothed, whose spirits were higher than common. Wit and fancy sparkled through her merry talk, and when George reluctantly departed, the night through which he rode seemed dark enough.

When he was fairly gone, Esther turned deadly pale, and burst into tears, trembling, and, at intervals, sighing heavily. A reaction had taken place. Mrs. Turnover, frightened, insisted upon her going instantly to bed; and, to make sure, saw her thither.

But Esther could not sleep. Something oppressed her breathing. The shooting pains in her hand and arm became more frequent and acute. Soon, the very silence seemed to grow intolerable, and she rose and opened the window. The moon was near the full, and, as Esther gazed upon the shining mystery sailing smoothly and dumbly through the fields of air, a sudden and violent shiver darted through her frame. Afraid of a chill, she closed the casement, and once more sought her pillow. "This time she slept, indeed, but it was only to be the victim of frightful dreams.

Wretched and unrefreshed, she rose almost with the dawn, and was shocked at her own strange looks. With a strong mental effort she threw off the morbid uneasiness that tormented her, and, calmed with prayer, walked out into the pleasure. The morning was dull and overcast, but this, perhaps, from harmonising with her present condition of mind, seemed more soothing than sunshine. At all events, she felt herself growing better, when a little girl, who was proud to act as her special attendant, tripped up the garden, and placed a letter in her hand.

The writing was strange. She opened it,

read—the blood, rushing to her head, almost blinded her—but she had caught the meaning :

"Beware of the step you are about to take. A caprice, bitterly repented, estranged for a moment two hearts long and loyally united. But for *you*, all had been well. Forego the hollow conquest you think you have made. It will be a noble sacrifice and will be as nobly rewarded."

There was no signature. But a legion of witnesses could not have brought home the truth more indispitably to Esther's bursting heart.

"This, *this*, then, was the coming horror!" she cried aloud. "I felt it; I was warned. Yet still, so sudden! My love so perfect, my hope so near! I—I will go in, and seek——"

With faint uncertain steps she made her way to her chamber. Hardly entered, she was seized with a convulsive nervous spasm, so violent that, unable to reach her bed, she sank upon the floor. In doing so, she struck her hand slightly on the ground. Instantly an acute pang, commencing from the scar, shot upwards, till it ended with a piercing shock, as if a nail had been driven into her very brow. The faintness increased.

"*Water*," she thought. "If I could only reach the water!"

She did manage it; but, although longing to cool her burning throat, dashed the half-filled goblet from her. A globe, rising with a twisting, vermicular sensation in her throat, threatened suffocation. She tried to cry out, but could not. She could only mutter:

"Must I die? What—what is this?"

As if in answer, a pang, more severe than any that had preceded it, shot from her wounded hand, succeeded by a convulsive tremor pervading her whole frame. She looked at the scar. It was red and angry, seemed ready to open, and even now giving out an ichorous fluid. The truth flashed upon her.

"I am lost," gasped the unhappy girl, sinking on her knees. "The mad dog!"

After a second or two, she rose and made two or three wild steps towards the door, as if to seek for aid; but, if so, the consciousness that no human help could now avail stopped her, and her thoughts flew to George. Even in that hour of anguish one comforting thought visited her. It was for *him* she had incurred this end.

But who—oh, who should tell him? What was to be done? Might Heaven send the needful strength, and keep her senses clear! She scarcely doubted of the latter, for, acquainted with the ordinary phenomena of this fearful disease, she recollected that the senses and faculties are rather stimulated by it than impaired.

Although medicine could not cure, it might alleviate, might retard. With a calmness that astonished herself, Esther laid out her scheme; for time was brief indeed, and nothing must go wrong. She sent word to her aunt that she should return to breakfast in half an hour; then, putting on her thickest veil, hurried to the house of the village doctor.

Mr. Woford was a young practitioner, with a wife who looked like a child, and several children, who looked as if they had no business there at all. He was alone in his surgery—he generally *was*—and thither Esther proceeded.

Throwing back her veil, and displaying her flushed cheeks and glistening eyes, the visitor held out her hand:

"Can you tell me, sir, what is the matter with me?" she asked him, steadily.

Mr. Woford smiled at the abruptness, but his look changed as he felt her galloping pulse, and remarked the tokens, manifest even to him, of unwonted disarrangement. There was fever, he thought, but his opinion inclined to hysteria, and the questions he put to her were inspired thereby. He recommended repose of mind and body, and promised to send immediately what he considered needful.

He quickly prepared the things of which he spoke, added some careful directions, and would have attended her home, but this she declined.

Mrs. Turnover was watching for her darling, impatient to show her something that awaited her approval. Esther mechanically followed the good lady, but the sight of the object—her own bridal dress laid out in state—was, in her overwrought condition, too much for her. Uttering a loud despairing shriek, she sank upon the ground, surrendering herself for the moment to all the grief and horror of her position. Disguise was no longer possible. It would soon become necessary, for the safety of others, to warn those around of the probably increasing violence of the paroxysms.

The grief and terror of poor Mrs. Turnover would have turned her brain, but that, fortunately, the honest soul could not be brought wholly to believe that there was literally *no* hope—that a creature so fair and young, so innocent, so cherished, must die without remedy, and *such* a death! But the intrepid girl herself was the first to regain composure. She had to make the most of the brief interval of tranquillity the sedatives had obtained, and at once began her melancholy task.

She wrote to George, in terms such as the purest affection alone could dictate, informing him frankly of her condition, and entreating him to come to her *that night*. This letter was not to be despatched to him till past noon; she had something else to do before they met.

Accordingly he only received it on his return from an afternoon ride, with what feelings I shall not attempt to describe. In his despairing anguish, one idea, almost like an inspiration, flashed across his mind. He remembered having heard, or read, that an eminent London practitioner, Sir Albert Ray, had, in his experience, met with two cases of admitted rabies, which had, notwithstanding, resulted in a cure. Catching desperately at this straw, he despatched an instant express to London, imploring Sir Albert, who was an old friend and schoolmate of his father, to hasten to Rosedale with all possible speed. His fingers could hardly form the terrible word that was to

warn Sir Albert how necessary was this speed. "More than one life depends on your coming," wrote George, yielding to the illusory hope. "She is my betrothed wife; I cannot bear her loss." Then, mounting his swiftest horse, he flew to Rosedale.

Esther's next act, after writing to her lover, was to order a carriage. Nobody thought of remonstrance. There was something in her manner that forbade interference with anything she might do. Alone and veiled, she got into the carriage, and was driven to The Haie. There she asked if she could be permitted to see Miss Mulcaster alone, or, if not alone, with her mother.

Miss Mulcaster *was* alone, in the garden, but she had been somewhat indisposed. The servant hesitated.

"I too am an invalid," said Esther, smiling sweetly, and, lifting her veil, disclosed a countenance now white as a shroud. The servant turned and led the way.

Mildred was walking pensively on one of the side terraces. She turned, with some surprise, to meet the unannounced visitor.

"Forgive, I beg of you, this intrusion," began Esther.

The face and voice sufficed: Mildred waved the servant away. They were alone.

"My object is threefold," said Esther: "to see you—to entreat your pardon—and to repair, if I may, the injury I have done to *you*, and to another. My name is Esther Vann."

"Esther Vann!" exclaimed Mildred, the colour rushing into her cheeks, "and you come—"

"Suffer me to speak," said Esther, "and do not wonder, nor be alarmed. I am dying. I have but a few short hours to live, and those, perhaps, marked with such agony as to make death, imminent as it is, too tardy. Again, I pray you not to fear, but, in charity, to hear my words. I am dying from the poison of a mad dog's foam, infused into an accidental scratch on my hand. You turn pale, and look pitifully on me. That is kind and hopeful, for my time—" she pressed her hands forcibly on her bosom—"I must be quick. Miss Mulcaster, you were to have been George's wife. He loved you—will do so still. As for me, it was a short and transient dream. If he has wronged you, oh, forgive him; has not *he* something to forgive? Take back from my dying hand the treasure I had no right to win. He—he is coming to-night. I have written to him to come and bid me farewell. Let me have *this* comfort—dying so young—that I have reunited those hands that should not have fallen asunder; reunited them, never to part again, until we all meet beyond the tyranny of doubts, and pains, and tears." As she concluded, she sank at Mildred's feet.

The latter, weeping, stooped to raise and embrace her, but Esther refused.

"Speak, only speak. Answer me, do you grant my prayer? What shall I say to him when he comes?"

"Say," whispered Mildred, drowned in tears, "say that I have nothing to forgive, much to repent of."

"Enough, I will go," said Esther, rising with difficulty to her feet; and resisting, with a sort of mingled fierceness and entreaty, Mildred's eager offers of support and succour, made her way to the carriage, and returned to Rosedale.

All that day the convulsive paroxysms recurred at intervals, the progress of the disease being apparently but slightly checked by the palliatives to which she had recourse. The patient became more and more intolerant of light; the slightest touch increased her suffering, and the mere mention of any fluid nourishment brought on the convulsive tremor.

It was dark when George arrived. It would be needless to depict the young man's passionate despair. In vain he had striven to nerve himself for the meeting. The sight of her he loved, dying in such a manner, and for *him*, broke down his manhood. Of the two, Esther was the more composed. She made him sit beside her, and, having somewhat calmed his sorrow, told him, after due preparation, what she had done that day, ending by entreating him, as he would impart some comfort to her dying hour, to accept the peace she had prepared for him, and seek, in the renewal of his earliest—perhaps most warranted—attachment, forgetfulness of this sharp but transitory grief.

George heard her with doubt and bewilderment, as if he hardly understood her words, or thought them expressions of delirium; but she convinced him to the contrary, and pressed her entreaties in such wise, that he at length gave way.

"If it be my misery to live," he said, in a broken voice, "I will do it. I will do *anything* that you command."

"I am happy," said Esther, softly. Soon after she sank into an exhausted sleep.

To the surprise of those around, there was, on the morrow, no aggravation of the symptoms. The dread march of the disease seemed to be arrested. But Mr. Woford warned them against any delusive hopes, adding, with truth, that such periods of relief were known to occur.

George's express returned from London almost as swiftly as he had sped thither. He brought a letter from Sir Albert Ray, containing—as might indeed be expected—but little comfort. The eminent physician had cases on his hands as urgent, if less distressing, but would use his utmost endeavours to comply with George's summons. He cautioned his young friend, however, to expect no real benefit from his coming, and, adverting to the cases instanced by George, owned that there was reason to believe that the parties in question might have been inoculated with the virus producing rabies at some antecedent period unknown to themselves. He added some brief suggestions for the patient's medical attendants.

"Just what I am doing," remarked Mr. Woford, with a satisfied air.

It was not until the fourth morning had

dawned that Sir Albert Ray drove up to the cottage. His eye caught the open windows.

"She lives yet!" he thought, with some surprise.

The next moment he was beside the bed of the fevered-tossing patient. George was astonished at the calm, confident, almost cheerful face with which the renowned physician gazed upon a case which every one felt to be hopeless, and he presently descended to the drawing-room, there to await the word of doom.

When Sir Albert rejoined him, the look of confidence had vanished. He pressed his young friend's hand.

"No hope?" murmured the latter.

"There *should* be none," replied the other. "I shall see her again, when I have spoken with her medical adviser—Mr. whom did you say?—Woford. He is sent for, I think. This is, you say, the *fourth* day—the *fourth*?" (George assented.) "That is unusual . . . but there is no absolute rule." And the doctor fell into meditation.

"Has this poor lady made frequent allusion to the *cause* of her attack?"

"Very frequent."

"Is she acquainted with the ordinary symptoms of the disorder?"

"Too well, I fear!"

"Hem! It may be so," said Sir Albert, thoughtfully. "Has she complained of a rising—a globular feeling (if I called it by its name, *clavus hystericus*, you wouldn't understand me) in her throat?"

"From the first."

"Where the deuce is Woford?" said Sir Albert, starting from his chair. "One question more, by-the-by. Had she suffered from any sudden and violent impulse of emotion?"

"None that I am aware of," said George, "but—"

"Stay you here," said the physician, and vanished.

The ten minutes that followed seemed interminable. When his step was heard returning, George's heart stood still.

"Can you bear *hope*?" were the first words he heard. "Mind, I say *hope*—no more. Then," continued Sir Albert, without waiting for an answer, "give me a magnifying-glass. Look at the toy they offered me above." (He showed Mrs. Turnover's spectacles.) "Nay, as I'm a living doctor, here's my own. How came I—I remember. Come with me."

They went up-stairs. Esther was sitting up in bed, pale as death.

"There's a complexion for you!" cried the doctor, exultingly. "Talk to me of rabies, with a face like *that*! Woford was a baby, and, 'faith, I'm not much better, for listening to you all, instead of attending to my work myself. Come, miss, I must have another and a closer peep at that hand. Out with it." He applied

the glass very carefully, looking at it again and again. Then he fumbled a little with his waistcoat-pocket, and presently saying sweetly, "Now *don't* scream," probed the open wound with a touch that absolutely wrung from the patient the shriek he had deprecated. It was but that single touch. He waved something aloft.

"There's your mad dog!" he shouted. Rabies! hydrophobia! Hydrofiddlestick! A rose-thorn and a lacerated nerve. In no more danger than I am! A sudden emotion brought on hysteria. Her own imagination did the rest. The case is uncommon. Keep her quiet—light solids. See, I am going to lie down for two hours. If, by that time, my lady here is not drinking like a little fish, I'll resign my diploma."

The doctor was right. In two hours he had departed, carrying with him countless blessings, and leaving a hint (which nobody comprehended) for Mr. Woford's future guidance, wherein the words "*borborygmi*" and "*clavus hystericus*" had a considerable share.

It was the fifth morning. The lovers—such, alas! they were—sat together for the last time, for Esther was inflexible. George's oath and promise must be held as sacred as though her own life had not been ransomed from the fearful doom that seemed to threaten it. Her whole soul was devoted to the task of reconciling him to the separation, which was inevitable, and must be immediate.

How far she succeeded there is no occasion to relate. The trial was not decreed.

George was summoned away for a few moments, and in his place there was kneeling a veiled figure. The veil was thrown aside, and never did Mildred's angel-face look more angelic than while she whispered:

"My darling! I come to give you back your own. My compact was not made with the living Esther, but the dead. He is yours, and my blessing with him; for you have taught me a noble lesson, that shall not be lost upon this selfish heart. And do not fear or grieve for me. When we meet, in pleasant days (I hope) to come, I shall be able to confess that my happiness, which deserved a deadly wound, has, like this dear hand, after all, sustained but a *mere scratch*."

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER IV. THE SHADOW LIGHTENED.

LONG before Mr. Carruthers, impelled by the irresistible force of routine, which not all the concern, and even alarm, occasioned him by Mrs. Carruthers's condition could subdue, had issued forth upon his daily tour of inspection, Clare's letters had been safely posted, by her own hand, at the village. She had slept but little on the night which had fallen on her first experience of fear and grief; and waking, at dawn, oppressed by a heavy sense of some dimly understood calamity, she had recalled it all in a moment, and, having hurriedly dressed herself, she went down to the breakfast-room and let herself out through the window, accompanied by her dog, whose joyous gambols in the bright morning air she did not notice. That morning air struck chill to the weary limbs and aching head of the sad, bewildered girl as she pursued her rapid way through the shrubbery, brushing the dew from the branches of the trees as she passed hurriedly along, heart-sick and yet wandering and confused in her thoughts.

Her walk was quite solitary and uninterrupted. She slid the letters into a convenient slit of a window-shutter of the general shop, to which the dignity and emoluments of a post-office were attached, glanced up and down the little street, listened to certain desultory sounds which spoke of the commencement of activity in adjacent stable-yards, and to the barking with which some vagabond dogs of her acquaintance greeted her and Cæsar, satisfied herself that she was unobserved, and then retraced her steps as rapidly as possible. The large white-faced clock over the stables at Poynings—an unimpeachable instrument, never known to gain or lose within the memory of man—was striking six as Clare Carruthers carefully replaced the bolt of the breakfast-room window and crept up-stairs again with a faint flutter of satisfaction that her errand had been safely accomplished, contending with the dreariness and dread which filled her heart. She put away her hat and cloak, changed her dress, which

was wet with the dew, and sat down by the door of the room to listen for the first stir of life in the house.

Soon she heard her uncle's step, lighter, less creaky, than usual, and went out to meet him. He did not show any surprise on seeing her so early, and the expression of his face told her in a moment that he had no good news of the invalid to communicate.

"Brookes says she has had a very bad night," he said, gravely. "I am going to send for Munns at once, and to telegraph to London for more advice." Then he went on in a state of subdued creak, and Clare, in increased bewilderment and misery, went to Mrs. Carruthers's room, where she found the reign of dangerous illness seriously inaugurated.

Doctor Munns came, and early in the afternoon a grave and polite gentleman arrived from London, who was very affable, but rather reserved, and who was also guilty of the unaccountable bad taste of suggesting a shock in connexion with Mrs. Carruthers's illness. He also was emphatically corrected by Mr. Carruthers, but not with the same harshness which had marked that gentleman's reception of Dr. Munns's suggestion. The grave gentleman from London made but little addition to Dr. Munns's treatment, declined to commit himself to any decided opinion on the case, and went away, leaving Mr. Carruthers with a sensation of helplessness and vague injury, to say nothing of downright misery and alarm, to which the Grand Lama was entirely unaccustomed.

Before the London physician made his appearance, Clare and her uncle had met at breakfast, and she had learned all there was to be known on the subject which had taken entire and terrible possession of her mind. It seemed to Clare now that she had no power of thinking of anything else, that it was quite impossible that only yesterday morning she was a careless, unconscious girl musing over a romantic incident in her life, speculating vaguely upon the possibility of any result accruing from it in the future, and feeling as far removed from the crimes and dangers of life as if they had no existence. Now she took her place opposite her uncle with a face whose pallor and expression of deep-seated trouble even that unobservant and self-engrossed potentate could not fail to notice. He did observe the alteration in Clare's

looks, and was not altogether displeased by it. It argued deep solicitude for Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings—an extremely proper sentiment; so Mr. Carruthers consoled his niece, after his stately fashion, acknowledging, at the same time, the unaccountable vagaries of fever, and assuring Clare that there was nothing infectious in the case—a subject on which it had never occurred to the girl to feel any uneasiness. Not so with Mr. Carruthers, who had a very great dread of illness of every kind, and a superstitious reverence for the medical art. The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the post, and Mr. Carruthers's attention was again drawn to the subject of the murder and the possibility of promoting his own importance in connexion with it. Clare's pale face turned paler as her uncle took up the first letter of the number presented to him by Thomas, footman, that official looking peculiarly intelligent on the occasion; for the letter bore the magic inscription, "On Her Majesty's Service," and the seal of the Home Office.

Mr. Carruthers took some time to read the letter even with the aid of the gold eye-glasses. It came from Mr. Dalrymple, who wrote an abnormally bad hand even for a government official—a circumstance which Mr. Carruthers mentally combined with the beard of which he retained an indignant remembrance as a sign of the degeneracy of the age. The irrepressible pomposity of the man showed itself even in this crisis of affairs, as he perused the document, and laid it down upon the table under the hand armed with the eye-glasses.

Clare waited breathless.

"Hem! my dear," he began, "this letter is connected with the matter I mentioned to you yesterday. You remember, I dare say, about the murder, and the inquiry I was requested by the government to make at Amherst."

Oh yes, Clare remembered; she had been very much interested. Had anything since transpired?

"Nothing of any moment. This letter is from Mr. Dalrymple. The gentleman who came here, as I told you, from Lord Wolstenholme."

Clare, still breathless, bowed. There was no use in trying to accelerate Mr. Carruthers's speech. He was not to be hurried.

"He writes to me that the Home Secretary regrets very much the failure of our inquiries at Amherst, in eliciting any information concerning the only person on whom suspicion has as yet alighted. He informs me that, as I expected, and as I explained to you yesterday"—Mr. Carruthers paused condescendingly for Clare's silent gesture of assent—"the jury at the coroner's inquest—it closed yesterday—have returned an open verdict, wilful murder against some person or persons unknown, and the police have been instructed to use all possible vigilance to bring the criminal to light."

"Have they learned anything further about the dead man?" asked Clare, with a timid look, half of anxiety, half of avoidance, towards the newspaper, which Mr. Carruthers had not yet

opened, and which no member of the family would have ventured to touch unsanctioned by the previous perusal of its august head.

"About the murdered man? No, I believe not. Mr. Dalrymple further informs me that the fur-lined coat, and all the other less remarkable articles of clothing found on the body, are placed in the hands of the police, in the hope of future identification. There is nothing more to be done, then, that I can see. Can you suggest anything, Clare?" Mr. Carruthers asked the question in a tone almost of banter, as though there were something ridiculous in his expecting a suggestion from such a quarter, but with very little real anxiety nevertheless.

"I—I really do not know, uncle," returned Clare; "I cannot tell. You are quite sure Evans told you all he knew?"

"Everything," replied Mr. Carruthers. "The clue furnished by the coat was very slight, but it was the only one. I am convinced, myself, that the man who wore the coat, and was last seen in company with the murdered man, was the man who committed the murder." Clare shivered. "But," continued Mr. Carruthers, in an argumentative tone, "the thing to establish is the identity of the man who wore the coat with the man who bought it six weeks ago."

A bright flush rose on Clare's cheeks—a flush of surprise, of hope. "Is there any doubt about that, uncle?" she asked. "The waiter described the man, didn't he? Besides, no one would part with an overcoat in six weeks."

"That is by no means certain," said Mr. Carruthers, with an air of profound wisdom. "Artists and writers, and foreigners, and, generally, people of the vagabond kind, sell and barter their clothes very frequently. The young man whom Evans describes might have been any one, from his purposeless, indistinguishable description; the waiter's memory is clearer, as is natural, being newer."

"And what is the description he gives?" asked Clare, faintly.

"You will find it in the weekly paper, my dear," returned Mr. Carruthers, stretching his hand out towards the daily journal. "Meantime, let's see yesterday's proceedings."

Hope had arisen in Clare's heart. Might not all her fear be unfounded, all her sufferings vain? What if the coat had not been purchased by Paul Ward at all? She tried to remember exactly what he had said, in the few jesting words that had passed on the subject. Had he said he had bought it at Amherst, or only that it had been made at Amherst? By an intense effort, so distracting and painful that it made her head ache with a sharp pain, she endeavoured to force her memory to reproduce what had passed, but in vain; she remembered only the circumstance, the fatal identification of the coat. "Artists and writers," her uncle had said, in his disdainful classification, occasionally made certain odd arrangements concerning their garments, unknown to the upper classes, to whom tailors and valets appertain of right, and Paul Ward was both a writer and an

artist. Might he not have bought the coat from an acquaintance? Men of his class, she knew, often had queer acquaintances; the possession was one of the drawbacks of the otherwise glorious career of art and literature—people who might require to sell their coats, and be equal to doing it.

Yes, there was a hope, a possibility that it might be so, and the girl seized on it with avidity. But, in a moment, the terrible recollection struck her, that she was considering the matter at the wrong end. Who had bought the coat made by Evans, of Amherst, and what had been its intermediate history, were things of no import. The question was, in whose possession was it, when the unknown man was murdered? Had Paul Ward dined with him at the Strand tavern? Was Paul Ward the man whom the waiter could undertake to identify, in London? If so—and the terrible pang of the conviction that so, indeed, it was returned to her with redoubled force from the momentary relief of the doubt—the danger was in London, not there at Amherst; from the waiter, not from Evans. Distracted between the horror, overwhelming to the innocent mind of the young girl, to whom sin and crime had been hitherto dim and distant phantoms, of such guilt attaching itself to the image which she had set up for the romantic worship of her girlish heart, and the urgent terrified desire which she felt that, however guilty, he might escape—nay, the more firmly she felt convinced that he *must* be guilty, the more ardently she desired it;—Clare Carruthers's gentle breast was rent with such unendurable torture as hardly any after-happiness could compensate for or efface. All this time Mr. Carruthers was reading the newspaper, and at length he laid it down, and was about to address Clare, when the footman entered the room, and informed him that Mr. Evans, the tailor, from Amherst, wished to be permitted to speak to him as soon as convenient. With much more alacrity than he usually displayed, Mr. Carruthers desired that Evans should be shown into the library, and declared his intention of going to speak to him immediately.

"I have no doubt, Clare, that he has come about this business," said Mr. Carruthers, when the servant had left the room. With this consolatory assurance, he left her to herself. She snatched up the newspaper, and read a brief account of the proceedings of the previous day—the close of the inquest, and some indignant remarks upon the impunity with which so atrocious a crime had, to all appearance, been committed, which wound up with a supposition that this murder was destined to be included in the number of those mysteries whose impenetrability strengthened the hand of the assassin, and made our police system the standing jest of continental nations. How ardently she hoped, how nearly she dared to pray, that it might indeed be so!

She lingered in the breakfast-room waiting for uncle's return. The restlessness, the uncertainty of misery, were upon her; she dreaded

the sight of every one, and yet she feared solitude, because of the thoughts, the convictions, the terrors, which peopled it. Three letters lay on the table still unopened, and when Clare looked at them, she found they were addressed to Mrs. Carruthers, and that two of the three were from America. The postmark on each was New York, and on one were stamped the words, "Too late."

"She is too ill to read any letters now, or even to be told there are any," thought Clare. "I had better put them away, or ask my uncle to do so."

She was looking at the third letter, which was from George Dallas; but she had never seen his writing, to her knowledge, and the two words, which he had written on the slip of paper she had seen, being a christian and surname, afforded her no opportunity of recognising it as that of Paul Ward; when Mr. Carruthers returned, looking very pompous and fussy.

"I shall communicate with the Home Office immediately," he began. "This is very important. Evans has been here to tell me he has read all the proceedings at the inquest, and the waiter's description of the suspected individual tallies precisely with his own recollection of the purchaser of the coat."

"But, uncle," said Clare, with quick intelligence, "you told me the man's evidence and Evans's description were as vague as possible. Indeed, I was quite struck by what you said. 'A description that describes nothing,' were your words. And don't you remember telling me how frequently you had observed in your magisterial capacity, that these people never could be depended on to give an accurate account of an impression or a circumstance? and how you have told me that it was one of the chief distinctions between the educated and uneducated mind, that only the former could comprehend the real value and meaning of evidence? Depend on it, Evans has no new ground for his conviction. He has been reading the papers, and thinking over the importance of being mixed up in the matter, until he has persuaded himself into this notion. Don't you recollect that is just what you said you were sure he would do?"

Mr. Carruthers did not remember anything of the kind, nor did Clare. But the girl was progressing rapidly in the lessons which strong emotion teaches, and which add years of experience to hours of life. Instinctively she took advantage of the weakness of her uncle's character, which she comprehended without acknowledging. Mr. Carruthers had no objection to the imputation of superior sagacity conveyed in Clare's remark, and accepted the suggestion graciously; he was particularly pleased to learn that he had drawn that acute distinction between the educated and uneducated mind. It was like him, he thought: he was not a man on whom experience was wasted.

"Yes, yes, I remember, of course, my dear," replied Mr. Carruthers, graciously; "but then,

you see, however little I may think of Evans's notions on the subject, I am bound to communicate with the Home Office. If Mrs. Carruthers's illness did not render my absence improper and impossible, I should go to London myself, and lay the matter before Lord Wolsenholme; but, as I cannot do that, I must write at once." Mr. Carruthers, in his secret soul, regarded the obligation with no little dread, and would have been grateful for a suggestion which he would not have condescended to ask for.

"Then I will leave you, uncle," said Clare, making a strong effort to speak as cheerfully as possible, "to your task of telling the big wigs that there's nothing more to be done or known down here. You might make them laugh, if such solemn, grand people ever laugh, by telling them how the rural mind believes two vaguenesses to make a certainty, and make them grateful that Evans came to you, and not to them, with his mare's nest of corroborative evidence."

Clare's fair face was sharpened with anxiety as she spoke, despite the brightness of her tone, and she had narrowly watched the effect of her words. Her uncle felt that they conveyed precisely the hint he required, and was proportionally relieved.

"Of course, of course," he answered, in his grandest manner; and Clare moved towards the door, when, remembering the letters, she said:

"There are some letters for Mrs. Carruthers, uncle. I fancy she is too ill to see them. Two are from America; will you take them?"

"I take them, Clare, why?" asked her uncle, in a tone of dignified surprise.

"Only because, being foreign letters, I thought they might require attention—that's all," said Clare, feeling herself rebuked for a vulgarity. "They come from New York."

"Probably from Mr. Felton," said Mr. Carruthers, pointing the gold eye-glasses at the letters in Clare's hand with dignified coldness, but making no attempt to look at them nearer. "You had better lay them aside, or give them to Brookes or Dixon. I never meddle with Mrs. Carruthers's family correspondence."

Clare made her escape with the letters, feeling as if her ears had, morally speaking, been boxed; and diverted, for a little, by the sensation from the devouring anxiety she had felt that Mr. Carruthers should communicate in the tone which she had tried to insinuate with the dignitaries of the Home Office.

The door of Mrs. Carruthers's room was open, and the curtain partly withdrawn, when Clare reached it. She called softly to Dixon, but received no reply. Then she went in, and found the housekeeper again in attendance upon the patient. To her inquiries she received from Mrs. Brookes very discouraging replies, and the old woman stated her conviction strongly that it was going to be a very bad business, and that Clare had much better go to the Sycamores.

"You can't do any good here, Miss Carru-

thers," said the old woman; and Clare thought she had never heard her speak so sternly and harshly. "I don't know that any one can do any good; but you can't, anyhow, and the fever may be catching."

Clare's eyes filled with tears, not only because she loved Mrs. Carruthers, not only because another trouble was added to the crushing misery that had fallen upon her, but also because it hurt her gentle nature keenly to feel herself of no account.

"No," she said, in a low voice, "I know I am of no use, Mrs. Brookes. I am not her child. If I were, I should not be expected to leave her. And," she added, bitterly, for the first time treading on the forbidden ground, "more than that, if it were not for me her son might be with her now, perhaps."

"Hush, hush, pray," whispered Mrs. Brookes, with a frightened glance at the bed; "don't say that word! She may hear and understand more than we think."

Clare looked at her in bewilderment, but obeyed her, and asked no questions.

"These came just now," she said; "my uncle desired me to give them to you."

She put the letters into the old woman's hand, and crossed the room, leaving it by the opposite door, which communicated with Mrs. Carruthers's dressing-room. As she passed through the inner apartment, which opened on the corridor, she observed that the portrait of George Dallas, which had hung upon the wall as long as she remembered the room, was no longer there.

The hidden anguish in her own heart, the secret which was crushing her own young spirit, made the girl quick to see and interpret any sign of similar sorrow and mystery.

"Mrs. Brookes has taken away her son's picture," Clare thought, as she slowly descended the stairs, "and she reads his name being mentioned in her presence. Dr. Munns asked if she had had a shock, and seemed to impute her illness to something of the kind. There is something wrong with George Dallas, and the two know it."

When Miss Carruthers left her, Mrs. Brookes broke the seal of one of the letters without a moment's hesitation, and read its contents, standing shielded from any possible observation by the invalid by the curtains of the bed. The letter contained only a few lines:

"I am going away, out of England, for a little while, my dearest mother," George Dallas wrote. *"It is necessary for the transaction of my business; but I did not know it would be so when I last communicated with you. Write to me at the subjoined address: your letter will be forwarded."* The address given was Routh's, at South Molton-street.

The old woman sighed heavily as she read the letter, and then resumed her attendance on her patient.

The day waned, the London physician came and went. The household at Poynings learned little of their mistress's state. There was little

to be learned. That night a letter was written to George Dallas, by Mrs. Brookes, which was a harder task to the poor old woman than she had ever been called upon to fulfil. With infinite labour, she wrote as follows :

"My dear Master George. Your letter has come, so I know you are not in England, and I am not sure but that some one else may see this. Your mother is very ill, in consequence of what she has seen in the papers. I do not believe it is as bad as it seems, though how bad that is, thank God, no one but your mother and I know, or can ever know, I hope and trust. Think of all the strongest and most imploring things I could say to you, my own dear boy, if it was safe to say anything, and if you can put us out of suspense, by writing, not to her, not on any account to her, but to me, do so. But if you can't, George—and think what I feel in saying that *if*—keep away, don't let her hear of you, don't let her think of you in danger. Anyhow, God save, and help, and forgive you.

"Your affectionate old Nurse,

"ELLEN."

The days went on, as time travels in sickness and in health, and there was little change in Mrs. Carruthers, and little hope at Poynings. The fever had been pronounced not infectious, and Clare had not been banished to the Sycamores. No fresh alarm had arisen to agitate her, no news of the suspected man had been obtained. The matter had apparently been consigned to oblivion. With the subsidence of her first terror and agitation, a deeper horror and dread had grown upon Clare. Supposing, as it seemed, that he was safe now, Paul Ward was still a guilty wretch, a creature to be shunned by the pure, even in thought. And the more she felt this, and thought of it, the more frankly Clare confessed to her own heart that she had loved him, that she had set him up, with so little knowledge of him after their chance meeting, as an idol in the shrine of her girlish fancy—an idol defaced and overthrown now, a shrine for ever defiled and desecrated. She was glad to think she had warned him; she wondered how much that warning had contributed to his security. She strove hard to banish the remembrance of him in all but its true aspect of abhorrence, but she did not always succeed; and, in the innocent girl's dreams, the smile, the voice, the frank kindly words would often come again, and make her waking to the jarring gladness of the morning terrible. A shadow fell upon her beauty, the gleeful tone died out of her voice; the change of an indelible sorrow passed upon the girl, but passed unnoticed by herself or any other.

The days went on, as time travels, in sorrow and in joy; and at length change came in Mrs. Carruthers, and there was hope at Poynings. Not hope, indeed, that she could ever be again as she had been, beautiful and stately in her serene and honoured matronhood, in her bright intelligence and dignity. That was not to be.

She recovered; that is, she did not die, but she died to much of the past. She was an old woman from thenceforth, and all her beauty, save the immortal beauty of form, had left her very quiet, very patient and gentle, but of feeble nerves, and with little memory for the past, and little attention or interest in the present, she was the merest wreck of what she had been. Her faithful old servant was not so much distressed by the change as were her husband and Clare. She had her own reasons for thinking it better that it should be so. For many days after convalescence had been declared, she had watched and waited, sick with apprehension for some sign of recollection on the part of the patient, but none came, and the old woman, while she grieved with exceeding bitterness over the wreck of all she so dearly loved, thanked God in her heart that even thus relief had come. None had come otherwise. George Dallas had made no sign.

So the time went on, and summer was in its full pomp and pride when preparations were being made on a scale suitable to the travelling arrangements of magnates of the importance of Mr. Carruthers of Poynings for a continental tour, recommended by the physicians in attendance as a means for the complete restoration of Mrs. Carruthers. The time named for the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Carruthers had nearly arrived, and it had just been arranged that Clare should remain at the Sycamores during their absence, when Mr. Carruthers startled Mrs. Brookes considerably by asking her if she could inform him where a communication might be expected to find Mr. George Dallas? It would have been impossible for human ingenuity to have devised a question more unexpected by its recipient, and Mrs. Brookes was genuinely incapable of answering it for a moment, and showed her fear and surprise so plainly, that Mr. Carruthers, much softened by recent events, condescended to explain why he had asked it.

"I do not consider it proper that the young man should be left in ignorance of his mother's state of health, and her absence from England," he said, with less stateliness than usual; "and though I do not inquire into the manner and frequency of his communications with Mrs. Carruthers, I believe I am correct in supposing he has not written to her lately."

"Not lately, sir," replied Mrs. Brookes.

The result of this colloquy was that Mrs. Brookes gave Mr. Carruthers Routh's address at South Molton-street, and that Mr. Carruthers addressed a short epistle to George Dallas, in which he curtly informed his step-son that his mother, having just recovered from a dangerous illness which had enfeebled her mind considerably, was about to travel on the Continent for an indefinite period, during which, if he (Mr. Carruthers) should see any cause for so doing, he would communicate further with Mr. George Dallas. This letter was posted on the day which witnessed the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Carruthers "and suite" (as the County

Chronicle was careful to notice) from Poynings; and Mr. Carruthers felt much conscious self-approval for having written it, and especially for having timed the writing of it so well. "Sooner, he might have made an excuse of it for coming here," thought the astute gentleman; "and it would have been heartless not to have written at all."

For once in his life, Mr. Carruthers of Poynings had written a letter of importance.

GAPS IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

GAPS in the Solar System is the title of a very interesting little paper which M. Radan has lately contributed to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, anent Le Verrier's startling announcement, that there ought to be some planet or planets between the sun and Mercury. Most of us have heard of "Bode's Law." The name, by the way, is doubly wrong, for it was a small German astronomer, named Titius, who discovered the curious analogy which the great Bode, of Berlin, talked so much about, and thought so much of, that at last his name got coupled with it; and it is not a law at all, but a trick of numbers, like that which was published lately in the newspapers about Louis Napoleon's life. Take the series, 0, 3, 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, 192 (each term of which, except the first, is double of the term before it); add 4 to each, and you have 4, 7, 10, 16, 28, 52, 100, 196, of which, all except the 28 and the 196, were found to answer pretty well for the distances of the planets known in Bode's time. "Herschel," "Uranus," or "Georgium Sidus," as he is "indifferently" styled, brought the law into immense favour. "Uranus," it is true, was discovered accidentally; but as soon as his orbit was determined, it was seen that 196 would stand tolerably enough for his distance from the sun as compared with that of the other planets; and so Bode's law got into such credit that everybody was wild about number 28. Zach calculated beforehand the elements of the planet which he felt must be there, evolving (German fashion) the facts out of his interior consciousness. Lalande divided the heavens among four-and-twenty astronomers, and had a long and fruitless search made for the missing star. And so Bode's law, again, did no good; for, after all, Piazzi, of Palermo, who, in 1801, found out "Ceres," as it is called, came upon it by accident, and thought for some time it was a comet. Indeed, it was very difficult to calculate the orbit of such a shy little planet; and when Gauss, then an unknown young man at Göttingen, had done so, and the Bodeites were beside themselves for joy, Olbers threw everything wrong by finding out another stranger, "Pallas," so close to "Ceres" as apparently to destroy the "law" of distances. This must be a comet, said everybody; and some went so far as to assert that, though tailless, it was surrounded by a hazy sort of beard. But, pretty soon, "Juno" and "Vesta," and ever so many more, appeared on

the scene. Retired doctors, Prussian post-masters of country towns, everybody for a year or two was always finding out a new planet; and the only consolation was that their distances all lay between 22 and 34, of which the mean is 28. A more serious blow to the so-called "law" of distances was the discovery of "Neptune," just twenty years ago. Some of us can remember how the scientific world was divided, and how high party feeling ran between the Adamites and the worshippers of Le Verrier. The new planet could not be brought under Bode's "law;" but its discovery was a remarkable instance of the way in which observation and theory supplement one other. Uranus did not, somehow, go on as he ought. Though not "discovered" till 1781, he had been catalogued (generally as a new fixed star) from time to time since 1690; but when Delambre and Bouvard began to tabulate his motions, they found that either the old observations must have been singularly inexact, or that some unknown force must be periodically acting upon him. By-and-by Bouvard's tables became quite useless, and he gave them to his nephew to be corrected. Bessel, of Königsberg, writing to Humboldt, talked of the trans-Uranian planet; and so things went on, till in 1844 Adams drew up a paper on the supposed orbit, which the Greenwich authorities suffered to lie unused till Le Verrier had announced (in June, 1846) that he had approximately determined the planet's position from the perturbations of Uranus. Then Challis was set to work on Adams's paper, and Galle, of Berlin, took Le Verrier's calculations. Challis found the star on the 4th of August, but marked it at first as a fixed star, not recognising its true character till the very end of September. Galle found it on the 23rd of September, the very day on which Le Verrier's papers reached him. Bode's law, then, has been going out of favour; no one would think, now-a-days, of quoting it to prove that a planet cannot exist in such and such a position. The perturbation method, on the other hand, so successful in discovering planets, has received additional confirmation from the fact that certain unexplained periodical oscillations of Sirius have been found to depend on a satellite, long suspected, but only discovered four years ago by the American astronomer, Mr. Alvan Clark. Well, then, says Le Verrier, how do you account for the irregular movements of Mercury? They differ from the perturbations of Venus or any of the rest, and cannot (as far as we know) be explained except by supposing that somewhere in the "intra-Mercurial space" there is a mass of matter, possibly minutely divided, sufficient to draw Mercury out of his true course. How to find this second group of asteroids, if such a group there is, is a difficult matter. Mercury himself is not the most easily observed of the planets; and, with the sun so near, such small bodies may well escape the best telescopes and the most eager eyes. The attempt has often been made to fix on certain "spots in the sun" as planetary bodies; the misfortune is, they

either do not reappear, or else come back so altered as to be unrecognisable. Ancient observations, giving "transits of Mercury" at dates when Mercury could not possibly have crossed the sun's disc, are pressed into their service by the theorists. It is assumed that the supposed Mercury was one of the intra-Mercurial asteroids. Lescarbault, in 1860, "discovered" a new planet, which he called Vulcan, between Mercury and the sun; but Lianis, observing at the same time in Brazil, found the sun's disc perfectly clear. The whole matter is as yet in a state of uncertainty; and yet the perturbations of Mercury are a fact, and are only to be explained by supposing that we do not yet know all the members of our solar system.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE CATO-STREET CONSPIRACY (1820).

ON the accession of George the Fourth to the throne, January 29, 1820, Lord Harrowby, President of the Privy Council, issued invitations to the cabinet ministers to dine with him on February 23rd, according to prescribed custom, at his house, No. 39, Grosvenor-square. The death and funeral of the old king in January, had, it may be mentioned, led to the suspension of cabinet dinners. The following well-known persons were the guests invited: the Earl of Liverpool, Lord Chancellor Eldon, Mr. Vansittart, Earl Bathurst, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Sidmouth, the Earl of Westmoreland, Lord Melville, the Duke of Wellington, Mr. Canning, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Bathurst, Mr. Wellesley Pole, and the Earl of Mulgrave.

The year 1819 had been a troublous one. The dissipation and reckless extravagance of the Regent, the dearth of bread, the oppressive taxation, the Spafields riots, and, lastly, the unnecessary, brutality of the Lancashire yeomen and the soldiers at the Peterloo meeting, had combined to irritate the poorer people and render them disaffected to the government. Reform and education had become subjects of discussion with all enlightened men; the desperate and the fanatical brooded over revolution, conspiracy, and violence.

Spies had been at work fomenting and urging forward plots, and the ministers, for many weeks, had had inklings of some impending danger. There had been apprehensions of a rising the night of the old king's funeral, but the conspirators, it was ascertained, had then altered their plans and projected a more cruel and wholesale massacre, urged on by the government spies, who had pretended to enlist themselves in their cause only the better to drag them to the scaffold.

The day before the cabinet dinner, as Lord Harrowby was riding in the Park, unattended, and preparatory to attending a council at Carlton Palace, a milkman, named Hiden, approached him at Grosvenor-gate, and handed him a letter directed to Lord Castlereagh—a letter which, he said, was of considerable importance to both

their lordships. The man wishing a second interview, Lord Harrowby met him next morning by appointment among the young plantations in the ring at Hyde Park.

Hiden then revealed the plots of a knot of conspirators who held meetings in a loft over a stable in Cato-street (now Homer-street), Edgeware-road, their leader a gentleman named Thistlewood, who had been formerly in the Marines, and afterwards a subaltern in a West India regiment. Their plan was to seize two pieces of cannon that were in Gray's Inn-lane, at the stables of the City Light Horse Volunteers, and six pieces from the Finsbury Artillery Ground, to take the Bank of England, set fire to New Furnival's Inn, the Portman-street barracks, and also buildings in other parts of London, to destroy the telegraph at Woolwich, and, establishing a provisional government at the Mansion House, send emissaries to Dover, Brighton, Ramsgate, and Margate, to prevent obnoxious persons escaping.

But the preliminary blow contemplated by these ferocious assassins was even more terrible.

Four-and-twenty men, armed with pistols, sabres, knives, pikes, hand-grenades, and blunderbusses, were going to proceed to Lord Harrowby's house when the company was assembled. Thistlewood was to knock at the door, and hand a letter to the footman. Directly the door opened, the band would rush in and seize the servants, threatening them with instant death if they resisted or gave the alarm. The stairs were next to be seized and guarded by men with fire-arms and grenades. If any one attempted to escape from above or below, hand-grenades were to be dashed in among them. Two men were also to be placed at the same time at the area, and also armed with grenades and blunderbusses, to stop all fugitives with showers of shot and fire. Two swordsmen (old soldiers), told off for the higher class of murder, followed by the rest, were then to rush into the dining-room and kill every one—the bad for their oppression, the good for keeping such bad company. Ings, a pork-butcher, the most savage of the crew, was going to arm himself with a brace of pistols, a cutlass, and a specially prepared knife of great strength, weight, and keenness, and, cutting off the heads of Lord Castlereagh and Lord Sidmouth, carry them off (for some undefined purpose) in two bags bought for the horrible occasion. Ings's cry, as they tore into Lord Harrowby's dining-room, was to be:

"Well, my lords, I have got as good men here as the Manchester yeomanry. Citizens, do your duty."

These words are significant. The citizens evidently meant to renew the horrors of the French Revolution, believing the popular disaffection to be general; and the allusion to Peterloo showed how deeply the cruelties of that day had struck into the hearts of the poorer classes.

In the mean time, other persons besides

Hidden had betrayed the conspirators. Dwyer, an Irish bricklayer, who had been employed to muster his countrymen to carry off the fire-arms from the Foundling, had informed the Secretary of State by means of a Major James. An infamous informer, named Edwards, a modeller and image-seller at Windsor, had also spoken to a gentleman of the king's household.

Lord Harrowby was wary, and did nothing to scare the assassins. The dinner was secretly put off, but not publicly or in the newspapers. The Archbishop of York, who lived next door, having a dinner the same day and hour, the carriages arriving at that house deceived the watchers whom Thistlewood had placed for the whole day and night before in the square, and no alarm was excited in the minds of the gang.

On the afternoon of the 23rd, Lord Harrowby, sending word to his brother ministers, took refuge in Lord Liverpool's house, nor did he write to his servants to countermand the dinner till eight o'clock in the evening. At nine, Thistlewood and his men were to enter Grosvenor-square.

At the time of the conspiracy, Thistlewood lived in a two-pair front room in Stanhope-street, Clare Market, and had long before his last fatal plot been tried for treasonable practices and acquitted, but afterwards, on a charge of abetting Dr. Watson's son in the Spafelds riot, had been imprisoned in Horsham jail. While there, he had been foolish enough to send a challenge to Lord Sidmouth. There can be no doubt that he was a rancorous, savage-tempered, malignant man, capable of any crime to effect certain undefined political changes. Thistlewood had resolved to have the meetings at his own house; but there happened to be a Bow-street officer living opposite, and he was afraid of the committees being discovered. Brunt, his savage lieutenant and secretary, was a boot-closer of the humblest kind, who rented two miserable rooms for his wife, child, and apprentice, in Fox-court, Gray's Inn-lane. The treasonable meetings were held in a room in the same house in which the prisoner Ings, the pork-butcher, also resided. Davidson, a third conspirator, a man of colour, was a cabinet-maker. Adams (the informer) and Harrison, one of the selected "swordsmen," had both been soldiers in the Life Guards. These men had frequently met in a back room in the yard of the White Hart public-house, Brook's Market, where they had been observed by Bow-street officers. The dépôt for powder and arms was at the house of a conspirator named Tidd, who lived in the Hole-in-the-Wall-passage, near Brook's Market. Harrison, while the plot was still ripening, had rented a stable in Cato-street, Edgeware-road. This obscure street lies between John-street on the east, and Queen-street on the west.

The stable belonged to General Watson, then abroad, and a month or two before had been used as a cowshed by a milkman named Firth. It is the first building on the right as you enter from John-street. Nearly opposite Cato-street

was a public-house called the Horse and Groom, where the conspirators assembled to drink and discuss preliminaries. The street in which the deserted stable stood was accessible from John-street by an archway, and opened into Queen-street by a path guarded by posts for foot passengers only. The stable had three stalls and a cart-shed. Nearly opposite the door was a step-ladder leading to a hayloft, and opening from this loft, which had, we believe, been used as a carpenter's shop, were two small rooms over the cart-house. The loft had two windows, one looking on the street, and this was kept covered with canvas, to prevent any one seeing in. The door of the hayloft, looking into the street, was kept strongly barred. In the floor of the loft were two long apertures for hay, which opened on the racks in the stable below.

About three o'clock on the afternoon of the 23rd of February, 1820, a man living at No. 3, Cato-street, observed Harrison, the soldier, at work cleaning the stable, and about half-past four, when he returned from work, the same man saw Davidson pacing up and down the archway in John-street, as if waiting for some one. About six o'clock, a woman living in the same street was startled by a man of colour, who had previously alarmed her by his dark face, suddenly presenting himself, and asking for a light for his candle; another inhabitant at No. 2 also watched twenty to thirty poor men go in and out of the stable carrying bags and bundles. One of them, as he stooped, had shown that he was armed.

Several rendezvous had been appointed for the conspirators. Some were to assemble near John-street, and to be brought to the stable by safe men; others were directed to the Horse and Groom. Tidd gathered his party at Hole-in-the-Wall-passage, Brunt at Fox's-court, while Thistlewood was to go straight to Cato-street, where the blunderbusses, daggers, pistols, swords, pikes, pitch-balls, and hand-grenades had by this time been collected.

At two o'clock on the afternoon of that day eight or ten of the conspirators met at Brunt's room, to fit flints to pistols and slings to cutlasses. Many of the men were still ignorant of what was to be done. They were only to be told at the stable, when it was too late to retract. On Thistlewood's arriving, he said:

"Well, my lads, this looks something like as if you were going to do something."

He then promised to give the men liquor, and sent out for drink for the informer Adams, who seemed very much depressed.

At the same time he sent for cartridge-paper, on which proclamations could be written. He then sat down and wrote:

"Your tyrants are destroyed—the friends of liberty are called upon, as the provisional government is now sitting.

"JAMES INGS, Secretary.

"February 23, 1820."

These bills were to be pasted up near the

houses that were to be set on fire, and would, it was supposed, arouse the people. When Thistlewood had written three of the bills, he said he was tired, and did not know what was the matter with him; he could write no more. Another man then wrote a fourth. In the mean time, Ings, with butcherly eagerness for blood, was preparing himself for action. He put on a black belt to hold two pistols, a belt round his shoulder for a cutlass, and two large canvas haversacks, in which, he swore, he intended to carry the heads of Lord Castlereagh and Lord Sidmouth, before setting them on pikes and carrying them before the captured cannon. When he had done all this, he viewed himself complacently, and said, with professional jocosity:

"I have not got my steel—I am not complete; but never mind."

He then drew a large, heavy, broad butcher's knife from his pocket, and showed the new-ground edge and the handle bound round with dark waxed thread, to prevent his hand slipping, as he said, "when he should be at work." With that knife he swore he would cut off the heads "of Castlereagh and the rest as he came at them."

In the momentary absence of the dreaded Thistlewood and Brunt, a man named Palin said he hoped all present knew what they had met there for, and had considered whether the assassination would be approved by the country, and would really draw the people to their help. Just then Brunt returned. Observing an alteration in the men's countenances, and being told the reason, he said:

"This is not the place. Go with me to Edge-ware-road. There you shall know what you are going about, and all that goes along with me I will take care shall have a drop of something to drink to put them in spirits."

The conspirators then armed themselves, put on their great-coats to conceal their weapons, and started for the rendezvous.

In the stable the men began at once to clean the arms which were lying on a bench in the loft, and to ferrule the pikes. The non-arrival of Tidd and his contingent, however, alarmed Thistlewood, and produced confusion among the conspirators, as they already knew that Lord Sidmouth had had intimation of their meetings in Brook's Market.

Ings, seeing his comrades' faces lengthen, began to stamp and swear, and tear his hair.

"If you begin to talk of dropping the concern now," he said, "I will either cut my throat, or shoot myself."

Brunt said there was no occasion for uneasiness; he would forfeit his existence if Tidd was not forthcoming. Thistlewood kept quiet, and said:

"For God's sake do not think of dropping the business now; if you do, it will turn out a second Despard job." Then he looked round and said: "You seem to think there are not men sufficient." (He cast up the number.) "Let us see, there are eighteen here and two

below, that makes twenty, that is quite sufficient; suppose there to be sixteen servants in Lord Harrowby's house, they are not armed; we shall go prepared, and it will not take us, from entering the house and coming out, more than ten minutes."

Fourteen men were to execute the murders, and six left to guard the servants. As the fourteen men were volunteering and being called out, Tidd entered, and Thistlewood, probably suspecting him to be a waverer, fixed his eyes sternly upon him; but, seeing Adams watching him, he turned away directly. Adams, going up to Tidd, said to him tentatively:

"Don't you think this is a pretty set out? Do you think they will be able to do this thing?"

Tidd replied in an ominous whisper, "Never."

Brunt had just produced a gin-bottle from his pocket to prime the assassins, when Adams heard somebody in the stable below.

Yes, the toils had long slowly been gathering round these desperate wretches. Into that loft, as into a full rat-pit, the sharp-toothed terriers of the law were ready to dash. In other rooms besides that of Cato-street cutlasses had been that morning ground, and pistol-flints fitted. The Bow-street officers had already been lurking about the Horse and Groom public-house, and had secured a pike-stave left by one of the conspirators. About half-past eight, twelve of them had met by appointment near John-street, and moved on together towards the well-marked stable. In the mean time, Lieutenant Fitzclarence, with a picket of the Coldstream Guards, had been sent by Mr. Birnie, the police magistrate, to wait in John-street till they were called. Ruthven (a tall sandy Scotchman), Smithers, Ellice, and others of the patrol, found the stable door watched by two or three men. The man of colour, Davidson, and Ings were guarding the stairs, with blunderbusses on their shoulders and swords by their sides. Ruthven instantly ordered these men to be secured, and mounted the ladder, followed by Ellice, Smithers, and three or four others.

There were about five-and-twenty men in the room, eating bread and cheese and drinking porter, or selecting arms from a long carpenter's bench which stood close by the wall. Just at that juncture, Thistlewood, hearing a noise, and some one calling, "Hallo! Show a light!" took a candle and looked down the stairs to see who was coming, and on seeing that there was a surprise he put the candle back on the bench, seized a sword, and with three or four others retreated stealthily to the further of the inner rooms—the one that had a window looking out into Cato-street. At that moment, one of the men seized below called out to warn his comrades:

"Look out there, above!"

At the same time, two of the constables, at first almost unnoticed, appeared at the top of the ladder, and presenting their pistols, said:

"Hallo, is anybody in the room? Here is a pretty nest of you."

Then another of the patrol cried :
 "We are officers ; seize their arms."

And a third :

"Gentlemen, we have got a warrant to apprehend you all, and as such we hope you will go peaceably."

Just then, Smithers, distrusting further parley, and believing, in his staunch way, in promptitude before the conspirators could discover the scantiness of the assailing numbers, or could muster courage to use their arms, cried :

"Let me come forward."

And pushed towards the door of the inner room, where Thistlewood stood thrusting with a very long sword. The leader of the conspirators instantly rushed forward and struck Smithers through his right side. The constable threw up his hands, his head fell back, he staggered against Ruthven, cried "O my God, I am done!" and fell dead near the opening of the stairs. Ellice held up his staff at Thistlewood, and threatened to fire with the pistol in his right hand, unless he instantly surrendered. The lights were immediately dashed out, and a voice cried in the darkness :

"Kill the — at once ! Throw them downstairs ! Kill them !"

Then there were twenty or thirty pistol-shots fired, and a tremendous headlong rush was made at the stairs, driving the Bow-street men backwards ; the conspirators leaping down into the manger through the holes in the floor, or by the window, others firing at the officers on the stairs, or up through the manger, all making for the archway in John-street. Tidd was caught in the doorway, thrown on a dung-heap by Ruthven, and disarmed. Davidson was pursued and taken in John-street. Wright, a patrol, was knocked down and stabbed by Ings, who was caught by a watchman in Edgeware-road, after having fired at Brooks, one of the officers who had attacked him with his cutlass.

In the mean time, the picquet of Foot Guards, hearing pistol-shots in the stable, had dashed up at the double, being met by a police-officer, who shouted to them :

"Soldiers, soldiers ! The doorway ! The stable !"

As Lieutenant Fitzclarence entered the door, a man cut at him furiously with a sword, but retreated before the soldiers, who then captured four of the remaining conspirators. Thistlewood had escaped before this in the first rush, firing at Westcott, a constable, cutting at him, and felling him.

The prisoners taken were searched at the Horse and Groom, and the loft was ransacked for arms. The soldiers found several parcels of bayonets, sharpened files, and pike-heads, a box containing five hundred and sixty-five ball-cartridges, fire-balls made of tow dipped in tar and brimstone, and grenades full of cart-nails.

Brunt was seized the next day at his own house, and was just despatching two baskets full of grenades and fire-balls to some accomplice living in the Borough. The same morning Thistlewood was seized in bed in a room with

the shutters up on the ground floor of No. 8, White-street, Finsbury-square. He was partly dressed, and in his coat lying by his bedside were found a silk sash, some bullets, and a ball-cartridge. In Tidd's house, No. 5, Hole-in-the-Wall-passage, were discovered a box of ball-cartridges, grenades, flannel bags of powder, bags of musket-balls, flints, pike-handles, rope yarn, and tar.

Thistlewood and his gang (eleven in all) were tried on the 17th of April, 1820, at the Sessions House, Old Bailey. Mr. Curwood and Mr. Adolphus appearing for the defence, Mr. Gurney, Mr. Littledale, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Bolland, with the Attorney and Solicitor-General, for the prosecution.

At this trial it was clearly elicited that towards the end of 1819 the prisoners Ings, Brunt, and others, had long planned a conspiracy, Thistlewood openly avowing that he had shared in four or five revolutions. Shortly before the funeral of the king they agreed to assassinate all the ministers, if possible, at a cabinet dinner. They decided that the Prince Regent's family had worn the crown long enough. The plot was always called by the gang "the West-end job." One night they were debating several diabolical plans, when Edwards (the spy) came in, and told Thistlewood there was a cabinet dinner to be held the following evening. Thistlewood, hardly believing the possibility of such good news, said he did not think it was true, but sent for a paper, and read aloud the announcement, to the universal rapture of the gang.

As for Brunt, he was nearly mad with joy.

"Now," he cried, with a ferocious oath, "I begin to believe there is a God ; for I've often prayed those thieves might be got together in order to give us a good opportunity to destroy them, and now my prayer is answered."

Thistlewood, always calm, stern, and practical, proposed an instant committee to arrange a fresh plan. Singularly enough, they chose for their chairman Adams, afterwards the informer. He called Thistlewood to order, and expressed his fears of a betrayal. The conspirators began to swear like madmen at this, and Harrison, walking up and down, fixed his eyes on Adams, and said, with an oath :

"The next man that drops a word to cool any one, and to prevent their going forward to do the deed they had determined, I'll run him through with a sword."

When called upon by the Clerk of the Arraigns, Thistlewood denounced the spies and informers as infamous liars and unreliable men, and violently denounced the judges for their servility and ambition, and Lords Castlereagh and Sidmouth as privileged traitors, who lorded it over the lives and property of the sovereign people with barefaced impunity. He said, in inflated and fanatical language :

"A few hours hence and I shall be no more ; but the nightly breeze which will whistle over the silent grave that shall protect me from its keenness will bear to your restless pillow the

memory of one who lived but for his country, and died when liberty and justice had been driven from its confines by a set of villains whose thirst for blood is only to be equalled by their activity in plunder."

Thistlewood then proceeded to disclaim any personal motive, but a wish for the welfare of his starving countrymen, and pity for the hundreds massacred and trampled on at Manchester. It was then, he confessed, that he had resolved on vengeance, "that the woes of the instigators should be the requiem to the souls of the murdered innocents." In this mood for wreaking what he considered national vengeance, Thistlewood said he had met the man Edwards, who, then poor and penniless, and without even a bed, was living near Pickett-street, in the Strand. He had since that appeared dressed like a lord, declaring he had been found to be the heir to a German baron. He had, in fact, sold himself as a spy to the government. This man had proposed to him to blow up the House of Commons, to attack the ministers at the Spanish ambassador's fête, or to throw hand-grenades into their carriages as they passed through the streets.

Then Thistlewood grew more excited. He talked of Brutus, and pleaded that when a set of men placed themselves above the laws and murdered the people, only a private arm could bring them to justice; and it was a duty of every one to rid his country of its oppressors.

Lord Chief Justice Abbott interfered, but Thistlewood continued to assert that high treason had been wrought against the Manchester people, and justice denied to the mutilated and the maimed. The Prince Regent had thanked the murderers still reeking with their gore. "If one spark of honour," he said—"one spark of independence—still glimmered in the breast of Englishmen, they would have rose to a man. Insurrection then became a public duty, and the blood of the victims should have been the watchword to vengeance on their murderers."

The Chief Justice: We cannot allow this.

Thistlewood: I have but a few lines more. The banner of independence should have floated in the gale that brought their wrongs and their sufferings to the metropolis; such, however, was not the case. Albion is still in the chains of slavery. I quit it without regret. I shall soon be consigned to the grave, my body will be immured beneath the soil whercon I first drew breath. My only sorrow is, that the soil should be a theatre for slaves, for cowards, and for despots. My motives, I doubt not, will hereafter be justly appreciated. I will therefore now conclude by stating that I shall consider myself as murdered if I am to be executed on the verdict obtained against me."

Davidson denied that he had ever heard of any intentions to dethrone the king, talked of Magna Charta, and the right of the people to arm to secure their privileges, and declared that he had been entrapped. He concluded with these words: "I can die but once in this

world, and the only regret left is, that I have a large family of small children, and when I think of that it unmans me, and I shall say no more."

Ings, who had once boasted that he had gone out intending to shoot the Prince Regent as he went to parliament, and regretted that he had not done so, said that, in his poverty, he had been ensnared by Edwards. He also alluded indignantly to the cruelties at Manchester. "To cut down unarmed men, women, and children," he said, "was a disgrace to the name and character of Englishmen. He hoped his children would live to see the day when they should all be free men and see justice administered. I had rather," he concluded, "die like a man than live like a slave."

Brunt said his life had been sworn away. He was no traitor or enemy to his king, but only to the boroughmongering faction, who destroyed the vitals of the country. He considered Lord Sidmouth's circular sent out to instigate the cavalry to murder the Manchester men. He admitted that he had attempted what he wished had been done, and he thought the country would have been compensated had those men been put out of the way. "I think," he said, "it is what they merit—I actually think it is what they merit. If a man murders my brother, I have a right to murder him. What does the Scriptures say: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' I have no private enmity against any gentleman in the country; it was for the public good that I came forward, and I would have gone through with it. Try me for murder, hang me, draw me, quarter me, but let me have justice; that is all I have to say."

Tidd said all the witnesses had sworn falsely except Captain Fitzclarence; as for shooting at that gentleman, as a private gentleman, he would as soon have shot his own father.

Thistlewood, Davidson, Ings, Brunt, and Tidd were sentenced to be hung, and to have their heads severed from their bodies—the quartering being graciously forgiven.

Wilson, Harrison, Bradburn, Strange, Gilchrist, and Cooper, were transported for life. At a cabinet council on Saturday, the 29th of April, the execution of the desperate men was fixed for the ensuing Monday. The governor of Newgate received the death-warrant at seven p.m. on Saturday, and instantly went to the condemned room and read it to the prisoners, who were sitting there watched by eight officers. They all rose respectfully when he entered, and seemed conscious of the news that he brought.

Thistlewood said quite calmly: "The sooner we go, sir, the better—our wish is to die as soon as possible." The other prisoners expressed the same feeling.

On Mr. Brown's asking them if they wished the assistance of a clergyman of any persuasion, they made no reply.

They slept soundly nearly the whole night, and only awoke at the unbarring of the cell doors to admit the ordinary, whose zeal had led him there at midnight. Mr. Cotton went to

each cell separately, and urged every argument to reclaim them to Christianity. Davidson was, however, the only man who joined Mr. Cotton in prayer, and he did so fervently.

The men could speak to each other through the loops in the cell walls; and Ings, during the night speaking of the scene in the morning, said, with savage bitterness:

"There was plenty of men present, but, d—n 'em, they have no pluck."

At five o'clock Mr. Cotton came again round the cells with the sacrament. All refused it but Davidson, who received the elements with sincere devotion. Brunt seized the wine, and drank the king's health, and so did Davidson. On the arrival of the sheriffs and attendants, the four leaders were so violent that it was thought prudent to pinion their arms before their irons were struck off. The procession then advanced through the long dark passages—dark even on that bright May morning. Thistlewood came first, his eyes fixed, and abstracted in thought. Then walked Tidd, trying to assume indifference, and rallied by Ings for his depression. After him strode Ings, laughing and reckless, followed by Brunt, who fixed his eyes on the officers with a sullen rage. Davidson was last, his hands clasped, his eyes uplifted, and his lips moving in prayer. At the lodge leading to the scaffold there was a moment's pause. Thistlewood clenched his lips, and with a frown watched the preparations on the scaffold.

On a bystander beseeching Brunt to ask God's pardon, Brunt replied, with savage contempt for his adviser:

"What have I done? I have done nothing. What should I ask pardon for?"

"Well done, Brunt," exclaimed Ings, and began to sing:

"O give me death or liberty,"

when he was summoned to the scaffold. He turned to Brunt, smiled, and shook hands with him. On entering the lodge, he had said to some one who told him to be firm:

"Firm? I am firm. But we have children, sir." There was true pathos in this.

When the handkerchief was tied on, he cried out:

"I hope, Mr. Cotton, you will give me a good character." The chaplain bowed. Ings then commenced playfully swinging about in his hand a cotton nightcap. While the hatch was opening, he exclaimed with a loud voice:

"Remember me to King George the Fourth. God bless him, and may he have a long reign."

He then requested some clothes he had left behind might be given to his wife. Determined that Jack Ketch should have no coat of his, he had taken off his best clothes, and put on a butcher's old greasy slaughtering jacket.

As he stood on the first step he turned to Davis, a turnkey, and said:

"Well, Mr. Davis, I am going to find out this great secret;" and then sprang on the

scaffold, exclaiming: "Good-bye, gentlemen; here goes the remains of an unfortunate man."

Brunt now stood almost alone with Davidson, muttering about the injustice of his fate, and wishing to be the next to suffer.

Once by one they had gone to death. Three times the mob had shouted and the drop had fallen with its horrible dull sound.

Davidson was called next. He was astonishingly composed. On the Sunday, at parting with his wife, he had said, "the day of his death would be the happiest of his life." He was in fervent prayer when he was turned off.

Brunt's last act was to take a pinch of snuff from a paper in his hand, stooping to put it to his nose, and pushing up his nightcap to take it. He took off his heavy nailed shoes, as one of the others had also done, and, as the report of the time says, threw them at the people, either in contempt, defiance, or to cheat the hangman.

Exactly a quarter of an hour after the last man was hung, the order was given to cut the bodies down. The heads were then haggled off with brutal clumsiness with a surgeon's knife. The mob expressed loudly their horror and disgust, more especially when the turnkey, who exhibited the heads, dropped that of Brunt. "Hallo, butter-fingers!" shouted a rough voice from the rolling crowd below. The time had gone by for such useless brutality. The executions occupied one hour and eight minutes. It was a quarter to eight when Thistlewood appeared on the scaffold, it was seven minutes to nine when Brunt's head, the last exhibited, was placed in the coffin.

The cavalry, stationed to line all the streets in the neighbourhood, then dispersed, and the mob slowly melted away.

GERMAN TEXT.

NO CARDS. These words, simple as they appear, imply much more than may be supposed at first sight. They denote disregard for the feelings of all our nearest female relations who luxuriated formerly in reading over and over again the inside of a small highly polished envelope with a silver cord in the shape of a true lover's knot; they denote economy, as they obviate the necessity of those neat little wedge-shaped boxes of bride-cake, the delight of the junior members of a household and the superstitious awe of the servant maids. The first column of the Times is all that now remains of the good old custom. Births, marriages, and deaths are, it is true, duly registered in that sacred column; we are even informed that the arduous task of putting a small gold ring upon a young lady's very small finger was successfully performed by the Bishop of Seven Towers, with the assistance of the dean and of the young curate, the brother of the bride. In some instances a special paragraph informs the public that there were six or twelve bridesmaids, as the case might be, smothered in white

Valencienne, with sashes all to match, turquoise bracelets and lockets, and that the happy couple left town to spend their honeymoon at Something castle, somewhere.

They do these things far better in Germany. At hap-hazard we have taken up various German papers of the month of October, of the year 1866. Here we have not only solid announcements of fact, but anticipations of the future, and ebullitions of love appear with large notes of exclamation at six kreutzers a line! Social advertisements amongst our Teutonic neighbours form a special branch of literature. A general opinion prevails in many quarters that Germans are a heavy phlegmatical set of men, addicted to copious chopins of beer, bad tobacco, philosophy, and hot stoves, intermixed with a smack of Mephistophelean or Machiavellian lore, dreamers, believers in fairies and in the black art, in hobgoblins, giants, and dwarfs, yet, at the same time, steady quiet Philistines, with a practical eye to business. Whoever has read Faust, or Don Carlos, the legends of the Hartz Mountains, the tales of the Brothers Grimm, the adventures of the famous Baron Munchausen, the legends of the Rhine, the Ballads of Uhland, the romantic Life of Bürger, the author of Leonora, or the deeper writings of Jean Paul Richter, so deep that, as a German seriously informed us, very few Germans even can understand them—a truism we quite appreciate after trying to make out Hesperus—or the philosophical works of Schelling or Strauss, cannot for a moment entertain such a notion as an idiosyncratic idea of the German mind.

Romance, poetry, and love are to be found in rich strata in the mental soil of German youth. It was romantic enthusiasm that placed the assassin's dagger in the hand of Sand, as it did a pistol recently in the hand of young Blind; it was the same feeling which induced young German fräuleins to keep as heirlooms handkerchiefs steeped in the blood of the murderer of Kotzebue, when his head fell on the scaffold at Heidelberg. The Sorrows of Werther, the idyl of Herrman and Dorothea, The Artists of Schiller—one of the noblest poems ever penned—or the lays of the lamented Platen, all denote the poetic soul of the beer-drinking German, and the advertisements before us tell us in unmistakable language that love is one of the essential elements in his character.

Engagements (Verlobungen), births, marriages, deaths, lie spread before us whilst we are writing these lines, in the most wonderful confusion. The styles vary from the high teuer Wachtel note of delight to the non più mesta of Alboni and the deeper tones of Lablache. Youthful aspirations of young "verlobte," calm expressions of consummated marriage, joyful ebullitions at the birth of sound and healthy children, flowery proposals of marriage, and pathetic announcements of the death of a relative or of a friend, denote the various chords which, when touched, vibrate in the German heart at the command of hope, joy, and grief.

But we are digressing. In duty bound, we will begin with the "Verlobte." Who has not seen, on a Rhine steamer, a young couple, regardless of all around them, sitting hand in hand for hours, generally near the prow, the castles of the old Rhine robbers and the cabbage-like-looking vineyards as it were gliding past them? The Seven Mountains, Rolands Eck, the Mouse Tower, have no charm for them; they are verlobt! The great fact has been announced to the public in the columns of the Cologne Gazette or of the Allgemeine Zeitung. No one thinks it odd that they should sit hand in hand for a whole summer's day. The Rhine makes a curve; the waters run rapid; they are passing the Lorey Lei. "Thou, my beloved (du meine geliebte)," says the enamoured youth, "art the siren that has attracted dein dich liebender Fritz! Shall I be drowned in the matrimonial waves that dash against the rock of my destiny? or shall I not find thee like Lora Lei, and take thee to these loving arms, thy hair and fair arms decked with coral?" "We are one soul," is the reply. "My Ich is thy Ich. Ich bin jetzt (I am now) what thou art. We are the same Ich. Death alone can separate us!" The advertisements which announce this happy Mahomet-coffin-like-intermediate-terrestrial-celestial existence are not quite so romantic. First, they have to be paid for in good silver groschen, and become of earth—earthly.

For the edification of our readers, we subjoin a few specimens. We vouch for the fidelity of translation.

"We have the honour to announce, say Otto Scholten and Frau, that our daughter Emma is verlobt with Mr. Apothecary Walther, of Munertslagen, and we hope that relations and friends will take this announcement instead of a special communication." In fact—no cards.

Pfarrer (rector) Achenbach, of Crombach, announces to his friends and relations that his daughter Bertha is verlobt (anglicè, engaged) to Herr Friedrich Wilh. Schürman, of Dorstfeld, drawing-master at the Gymnasium. He does so respectfully.

The next that attracts our attention is to the effect that Johanna, daughter of Ober-Post-Secretär Kauffman and frau, is engaged to the young curate Hildebrand.

The following is curt:

"To render further notice unnecessary, Marie Libeau and Eugen Brandt are verlobt."

Hundreds similar are on our table; but we are suddenly startled by a new feature in the notifications. We take the following from the columns of the Cologne Gazette of the third October

"VERLOBUNGS ANZEIGE.

Auguste Albrecht—Otto Budde

Verlobte.

Rothenfelde. Barmen."

Are the good towns of Rothenfelde and Barmen "verlobt," or are they the respective dwelling-places of the young couple? Probably so. For in the next "Verlobung," headed "Statt besonderer Meldung," we find at the

end Schmallenberg and Oberkirchen, in the next Cologne and Düren, then Witten and Dortmund, Mülheim and Elberfeldt, and so on. Friendly feelings are doubtless aroused in the breasts of the inhabitants of each sympathising city—it is an approximation towards German unity!

A doubt crosses our mind whether these public notifications, in so far as *verlobte* are concerned, might not hold good in law in case of a breach of promise. We pass on through a whole row of "*Verlobte*," and stumble upon an indignant parent, who declares (in the usual bad type) that there is not any truth in the announcement of the "*Verlobung*" of his daughter. We quote verbatim:

"I hereby declare that the announcement that appeared in the Cologne Gazette of the 2nd of October of the present year, of the *Verlobung* of my daughter Anna with Herr Heinrich Montz is a knavish mystification (eine schurkenhafte mystification)"—not a bad expression of an injured parent. It is duly signed, "Franz Reimers, 3rd Oct., 1866."

Whether the month of October is particularly selected for "*Verlobungs*" we do not know; but, as we take up paper after paper, they are as thick as bees; they tread close upon each other's heels, like people in a crowd on a Jenny Lind night. We must, however, leave the *Verlobung* purgatory, and, like Dante and Virgil, visit other regions.

We come to the *Heiraths-Anzeige*! We are too polite to quote in full the immortal bard of Italy—the terrible words above a certain portal:

Through me you pass into the City of Woe,
Through me you pass into eternal pain . . .
All hope abandon, ye who enter here.

Most of these are short and simple. They denote happiness. For instance:

"Albert Rauch, Adèle Rauch—married."

The next is more explicit:

"H. Ferber, railway secretary, and Elizabeth Ferber, born Klöcker, respectfully announce their heute-vollzogene eheliche Verbindung"—anglicè, "their-this-day's consummated matrimonial alliance."

The matrimonial announcements all partake, more or less, of the same character; they are much tamer than our own. There are some curious phases in German matrimonial life. There is not any law against marriage with a deceased wife's sister. We know a learned professor who married three sisters successively, beginning with the eldest. We have also been present at an evening party where a lady was present with one (reigning) and two ex-husbands in the room, all chatting amicably together.

The "*Geburts-Anzeige*," or announcements of births, are far more interesting. Here the German heart expands. It is not the monotonous, "On the — instant, Mrs. Smith, of a daughter." The felicity of the proud father and of the happy mother are made public in glowing language. Domestic bliss emerges, as it were, from the

home fireside, and stalks forth into the broad daylight. Not only is the population informed that Mr. Seiler has a son; he is described as "*gesund*" and "*tüchtig*"—healthy and strong—with the addition that the hearts of both parents are greatly rejoiced at that great fact. The welcome little stranger enters public life in swaddling-clothes. Some of these notifications are very amusing.

A happy couple announce that, in consequence of the birth of a fine boy, the hearts have been greatly rejoiced of Emil Month and Appollonia Month, born Kurth. Happy Appollonia! may her boy prosper! The next is pretty and playful:

"Mr. Aloys Weiler announces to his relations and friends the joyful news that his own dear little wife (mein liebes Fräuchen) Ottilia, born Daniels, presented him with a sound strong daughter on the third of October (mit einem gesunden und kräftigen Tochter).

The third of October seems to have been very prolific in healthy babes. No less than six in a row in one column. Mothers and children doing well.

Relations, friends, and acquaintances (says Baumeister Kleckner) are most respectfully informed—to avoid the necessity of special notification—that my dear wife (meine liebe Frau) Pauline, born Kuke, has been safely delivered (glücklich entbunden) of a healthy girl!

The next is a boy:

"This day (2nd October)," announces Conrad Schneider, "my dear wife Francisca, born Richter, was happily delivered of a sound boy."

More rejoicings of hearts follow. A happy father is particular about the exact time of the auspicious event. It happened "*gegen Mittag*"—about noon.

Mr. Hermann J. Klein and his wife, Bertha Klein, born Schnitzler, announce the happy birth of a *little daughter*—eines gesunden Tochterchens. She is *gesund*; and so their hearts rejoice. Decidedly Lilliputian. *Klein* means small, and *Schnitzler* is the diminutive of a diminutive.

It comes in context with the very next one:

"This morning, my dear wife Elise, born Schmachtenberg, was easily and happily delivered of a sound strong boy."

We leave the sound healthy strong boys and girls, and enter on more delicate ground.

Some young gentlemen have not the courage to propose; some young ladies cannot induce them to come forward. An advertisement is the last resource of these unhappy individuals. Some of these effusions are highly poetical and romantic, others more practical, especially as regards the number of thalers required for happiness. Matrimonial agencies flourish in Germany. You pay so much per cent to the Galeotto who manages the business.

The following is a *bonâ fide* marriage advertisement (reelles Heiraths-Gesuch). We quote it in extenso, as a sample of that peculiar style

of literature which flourishes on the banks of the Rhine:

"A young man, evangelical, the possessor of a considerable wholesale business, is desirous of marrying a young lady of from twenty to thirty years of age, who possesses property to the amount of five thousand to ten thousand dollars. A taste for domestic life, an amiable and kind disposition, are indispensable conditions. No agents need apply. Ladies who answer this advertisement may rely upon confidence and secrecy, with the assurance that the advertiser is in earnest. A carte de visite would be desirable."

Here is another:

"An excellent man of business (ein tüchtiger Geschäftsmann), of twenty-nine years of age, is looking out for a partner through life; a little ready money. Ladies who will reflect upon this offer are requested to send a reply to F. P., with their photographs, to the office of the journal. If requested, the letters will be returned."

Another runs thus:

"A young merchant of very good family, in the possession of some thousand guildens, wishes for a companion through life, with a disposable property of eight thousand or ten thousand dollars. The matrimonial, enviable happiness of a friend who married through the same medium, is the cause of this advertisement."

The next is from a lady:

"An educated man of property, mixing in good society, may, under circumstances, find a good match with a young lady. Family affairs have induced the young lady to take this step. The offer is bonâ fide, and it is therefore only those who are in earnest and can give satisfactory explanations that need apply."

The next wife-advertiser is not particular about widows:

"An educated young man, evangelical, thirty years of age, proprietor of a good business, wishes, as he has free time on his hands, to find a cultivated, amiable, also domestic girl or a young widow without children and with circa five thousand to ten thousand dollars ready money, as a life-companion. Letters, post free.

We now come to an enticing one:

"A young man, heir to a fine baronial property, with an old nobility name (of noble descent), is desirous of finding a wife with property to correspond. As the state of his family affairs are most accurately given and authenticated by documents, no proposals of an ambiguous nature will be attended to. The most honourable confidence will be given by word of mouth and shake of hand (durch Wort und Handschlag). Ladies who will reflect upon this must address their letters post paid," &c.

"A young merchant, of the evangelical confession, residing in a manufacturing town in a Rhine province, is desirous of a life-companion. Money is not a consideration; a gentle mind

(ein sanftes Gemüth) and a loving heart (ein liebreiches Herz) and a pleasing exterior (ein angenehmes Aeußere) are, on the other hand, indispensable. Letters, with photographs, post paid," &c.

"A shy young landwirth, who has not lady-acquaintances, wants a wife. He is of good property. The lady must have twenty thousand dollars of her own. Strict secrecy may be relied upon."

"A young man, eager of marriage (ein junger heirathslustiger Mann), of a very good family, who has a certain income, advertises for a partner through life. Education and domestic virtues are the chief points. Carte de visite, and letter post paid."

We might quote many more. It must not be supposed that these appeals are "hoaxes." They are really meant in earnest, and often result in matrimony. It may seem odd to us that a well-doing young man should be driven to advertise for a wife, that he could not find a single girl amongst his own acquaintances to be a partner through life. Yet we do occasionally hear of a young lady of good family marrying her groom, and of respectable old gentlemen marrying their housekeeper or their cook. Proh pudor! we may exclaim; but it is nevertheless a melancholy fact. We might even mention a step beyond.

We now enter the last region, with that respectful feeling for the departed which is their due. The Todes-anzeige, or "deaths," are generally written in language of deep feeling. We give one as an example, omitting both name and place. It is the departure of a fair girl, who died broken-hearted three months after the news of the death of her brother, killed in the battle of Königgratz. It is put in by her surviving brother, also in the army:

"My only and beloved sister has softly left this world for a better one, after long anguish, in her twenty-fifth year. The death of her brother, who found a hero's grave on the battlefield of Königgratz, she bore in silent submission to the will of the Almighty. She died on the same couch where her father died eighteen months before, and she has now joined them both in eternity."

We place a wreath of our own upon that fair girl's grave. There is a curious custom in Germany as regards the dead. Let us take Munich for instance. In the churchyard, or, as it is there termed, "God's acre," there is a dead-house, where the bodies may be inspected by any one, the coffins being left open. Galvanic wires are attached to every pulse, so that the slightest evidence of life would cause a bell to ring in the room of the guardian of the place, who dwells above. It is not a pleasant abode, but more than one life has been saved.

To return to our advertisements. A German local paper is the medium for ventilating all the more prominent passions or feelings of the heart.

In the papers before us we have not discovered any desperate declarations of despond-

ing love, either in prose or verse ; but we have seen such. We conclude with :

“SYLPHIDE !

“In three days you shall hear from me.”

MODERN SCENES AND SCENERY.

WHEN I here speak of modern scenery, I am not thinking of the improvements that have taken place in the art of stage decoration within the last forty years ; but I use the word in a much more relative sense, referring it back to the latter half of the seventeenth century. It is generally agreed that the history of the English drama was chopped into two pieces, exceedingly unlike each other, when the Puritans closed the theatres, in 1647, for a period of thirteen years. For my own part, being in the sere and yellow leaf, I am not inclined to look upon thirteen years as such an exceedingly long time as some apparently suppose it to be ; and my studies of dramatic literature, imperfect as they are, serve to convince me that the later plays of one epoch are much more like the earlier plays of the other than is generally imagined. But no matter for that. The period of theatrical repose that continued through the Commonwealth and the Protectorate will serve very well to make a division. For the purpose of marking a boundary between two adjacent counties, a fordable brook will serve as well as a navigable river.

Besides, though there may not be any very great difference between the plays that end one epoch and begin the other, in our knowledge of the two epochs the difference is enormous. In the dramatic literature produced during the reigns of Elizabeth and the first two Stuarts we may be as learned as we please, allowance being of course made for the depredations committed by Warburton's cook. But of the authors, Shakespeare included, we know next to nothing ; of most of the actors, still less ; while the details of theatrical production afford one of those broad fields for conjecture, which are the special delight of the archæologist. Even our information as to the repertory of the old theatres, and their rank with respect to each other, is most imperfect. That the “King's servants,” who owned the Blackfriars and the Globe, held the topmost position, is a certain fact, and as they brought out the works of Shakespeare and other leading dramatists, it would not be extremely difficult to construct a series of programmes that might give a tolerable notion of their proceedings, so far as that could be done without dates. But directly we quit this company and endeavour to ascertain the relative rank of some nine theatres, belonging to other companies, we are in a fog. Even the scanty information afforded by the following short passage which I extract from a well-known “Dialogue on Old Plays and Old Players,” published in 1699, is to be received with gratitude :

“Before the wars, there were in being all these theatres at the same time: The Black-

friars and Globe on the Bankside, a winter and summer house belonging to the same company, called the King's servants ; the Cockpit, or Phoenix, in Drury-lane, called the Queen's servants ; the private house in Salisbury-court, called the Prince's servants ; the Fortune, near Whitecross-street ; and the Red Bull, at the upper end of St. John-street. The two last were mostly frequented by citizens and the meaner sort of people. All these companies got money, and lived in reputation, especially those of the Blackfriars, who were men of grave and sober behaviour.”

The above refers only to the last years of the period ending in 1647. The queen, who gave her name to the actors at the Cockpit, was originally Anne of Denmark, and it seems that, on her death in 1619, the nominal patroness of the company was the Princess Elizabeth, but that they resumed their old title on the marriage of Charles the First, in compliment to Queen Henrietta. The prince named in connexion with Salisbury Court is Charles the Second, as Prince of Wales. The two theatres in Shoreditch, and the smaller theatres on the Surrey side of the Thames, which, according to Mr. J. P. Collier's opinion, were all open on the accession of James the First, have vanished from the record ; and of the five theatres mentioned, there are three respecting which we know next to nothing. The Fortune and the Red Bull were evidently not deemed places of fashionable resort at the date to which the Dialogue refers, but there might have been as much difference between them as between Sadler's Wells, under Mr. Phelps, and a low theatre in some obscure suburb. From a “Prologue upon the removing of the late Fortune players to the Bull,” in which the audience are requested to remark that the curtains are “pure Naples silk, not worsted,” and to forbear the “wonted custom” of throwing pieces of tile or pears against them, to lure the actors forth, Mr. J. P. Collier conjectures that in 1640, when the Prologue was published, the Bull was superior to the Fortune. I am not quite clear that the premisses are sufficient for the conclusion, and, at all events, if the Bull was superior to the Fortune in 1640, we may fairly conjecture that in the days of the noted Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, who owned the Fortune, and there acquired all his wealth, and moreover was deemed one of the greatest actors of his time, the Fortune stood higher than the Bull. But Alleyn had retired from theatrical life before the death of Henry, Prince of Wales, which occurred in 1611, and in thirty years all sorts of changes are possible. Who that derived his knowledge of the Drury-lane and Olympic theatres from the years immediately preceding the management of the latter by Madame Vestris could have foreseen that a time was coming when the small upstart house in Wych-street would be one of the most fashionable in London, while the larger edifice, to which a hundred traditions are attached, would be so completely ignored by the better class of playgoers, that its restoration to something like its old position

within the last few years is regarded as an extraordinary event? How, too, about the house in Salisbury-court, which was only within a long stone's throw of the Blackfriars? It was a "private" house, like its haughty neighbour, which was in itself a distinction, as I have pointed out in my "New View of an Old Riot,"* so its inferiority must have been rather in degree than in kind. The same may be said of the Cockpit, about the inferiority of which to the Blackfriars there can be no doubt, while the acting of the Queen's servants does not seem to have been of first-rate quality. But what was the position of the Cockpit at any given time compared to that of Salisbury-court? In the year 1638, the Queen's servants moved from the former to the latter, having originally migrated from the Bull; but towards the end of the reign of Charles the First, they were, according to the dialogue cited above, settled once more at the Cockpit.

In fact, the more we look at our materials for information respecting the condition of the London theatres before the Civil Wars, the less reason have we to be satisfied with our knowledge. On the other hand, when the Merry Monarch comes home in 1660, our theatrical history rapidly becomes clear and definite, and there is scarcely a single performance of which we cannot learn the details. No corresponding difference is to be found with respect to our knowledge of the theatrical transactions of London from 1660 to 1866, and therefore the word "modern" may fairly be applied to the two centuries and more comprised between these dates, while the word "old" is used for something like a century preceding.

As, however, the fog which has cleared away to display the glories of the brightest day leaves behind it a haze, which lasts for at least an hour, so are we a little in the dark with respect to the theatrical details of the years immediately following the restoration of Charles the Second. We could tell on our fingers the names of the members of the two companies—the king's and the duke's—to whom at once was appropriated the whole field of the drama. We not only know by which of these two companies every piece was performed, but, with very few exceptions, we could accurately describe the cast. But with respect to the early employment of painted scenes our knowledge is lazy. It is the chief object of this paper to show wherein the haze consists, and to contribute towards its dissipation.

In a paper on "Old Scenes and Scenery,"† I have already expressed a suspicion that the use of painted scenes had extended beyond the narrow circle of court masques before the year 1647, and found its way into one or more of the theatres, which, whether technically called "public" or "private," were open to public patronage. That painted scenes were not in common use I will concede, so we may generally agree that, when the Puritans shut up the

theatres, the general notion of a theatrical performance left in the mind of the English public was one in which the relations of the characters with regard to place were indicated by the use of "traverses," or movable curtains, as more particularly described in the paper on "Old Scenes and Scenery."

In the year 1658, that is to say, during the Protectorate of Cromwell, Sir William Davenant gave daily at the Cockpit theatre, closed for dramatic purposes, an entertainment entitled *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru*, "expressed by vocal and instrumental music, and by art of perspective in scenes." When Sir William, under the patent granted by Charles the Second, opened the theatre in Lincoln's Inn-fields, he revived this entertainment, as one of the acts of a medley work called *The Play-house to be Let*, each act of which is a distinct piece, and which is to be found in Davenant's collected works.

Now, if the manner in which the Cruelty of the Spaniards, as represented at the Cockpit, was like that in which it was performed at Lincoln's Inn-fields, we had, in the year 1658, not only scenery, but very remarkable scenic effects in a place of public amusement. In the stage directions for the first "entry" (a word used instead of "act"), we are told that a "lantchap (landscape) of the West Indies is discerned, distinguished from other regions by the parched and bare tops of distant hills, and by sands shining on the shores of rivers. The prospect is made through a wood, differing from those of European climates by representing of cocoa-trees, pines, and palmitos, and on the boughs of other trees are seen monkeys, apes, and parrots, and, at further distances, valleys of sugar-canes."

Here is evidently what a stage-carpenter would call a "cut wood" with a landscape in the background, and we may observe that Sir William is very anxious to make his picture a correct representation of South American or, as he would say, "West Indian" scenery. Further stage-direction shows that the employment of characteristic "properties" must have been very extensive, and the fact is important, that every "entry" is illustrated by a separate picture. But if we have scenery, we have, in this case, no writing that can strictly be called dramatic. Every entry opens with a speech, spoken by the "Priest of the Sun," which is invariably followed by a song and chorus. The rest of the entertainment consists of dancing and dumb-show, sometimes of a very elaborate kind; but the personages never speak to each other, nor do the lyrical portions of the work ever take a dramatic form. Malone is of opinion that Cromwell permitted the performance at the Cockpit, as an exception to theatrical exhibitions in general, on account of his hatred to the Spaniards. This opinion may be correct; but when I consider the peculiar structure of the piece, and the care that is manifestly taken to make it look like a stage-play, without actually becoming one, I cannot help surmising that the exclusive patronage it re-

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, September 15.

† See No. 391 of the present volume.

ceived represented a prejudice that may be found among those semi-Puritans of the present day, who abhor theatres, but have no objection to "entertainments."

Davenant's opera, the *Siege of Rhodes*, brought out on the opening of the theatre in Lincoln's Inn-fields, in 1661, was a lyrical drama to all intents and purposes, and was illustrated throughout with painted scenery, which changed with a supposed change of place. Here, therefore, we find the use of painted changeable scenery perfectly known and used in a public theatre in 1661, to the great delight, doubtless, of Samuel Pepys, who, on the 2nd of July in that year, went to see the *Siege of Rhodes*, then performed for the fourth time.

All this seems clear as an Italian sky; but here comes the haze. Bearing in mind that the art of illustrating a piece by scenery, exactly after the principle now adopted, was fully known and practised in 1661, we turn to the *Indian Queen*, of Dryden, which was first brought out at the Theatre Royal (occupied by the King's company, under Killigrew) in 1664. Here we find "Act I., Scene I.," with divers entrances and exits, and no indication of a picture, so that whether we regard the word "scene" in the Latin or in the modern English sense, it is wholly superfluous. Then comes "Act II., Scene I.," which, still without any indication of a picture, opens with the stage directions, "Enter Ynca and Orazia, as pursued in battle;" and when all the persons who enliven the imaginary battle-field have retired, we are informed, without use of the word "scene," that "Zempoalla appears seated upon a throne, frowning upon her attendants." Here is a manifest change of place; but whether there was a change of picture, or indeed any picture at all, deponent sayeth not. At the opening of the third act we find Zempoalla—who, by the way, is the usurping Indian queen—"seated upon her slaves in triumph;" and when she and her pomp have vanished, we have this direction, "Ismeron asleep in the scene." Here a change of the supposed place of action from the palace of Zempoalla to the prison in which Ismeron is confined, is plainly indicated by the dialogue; but whether there is a painted prison or not we do not learn, and the same may be said when we come to Act IV., and find that "the scene opens and discovers Montezuma sleeping in prison." But with the fifth act a total change of system begins. We are told that "the scene opens and discloses the Temple of the Sun, all of gold, and four priests in habits of white, and red feathers, attending by a bloody altar, as ready for sacrifice." Here we have the picture at last—the scene in the modern sense of the word.

Why were the previous pictures, which, according to our present stage arrangements, ought to have been pretty numerous, passed over without mention? If throughout the entire play no reference whatever had been made to a picture, we might conclude that the poet considered the indication of such decorations as important merely to the stage director, and not to the

general reader. But he does mention the Temple of the Sun, and he does not mention anything else, though this could not have concerned the reader more than the rest of the scenery. Here we have an instance of the haze to which I have referred.

To contribute towards the dissipation of this haze, I would call attention to the fact that the fifth act, supposing the play to be pictorially decorated throughout, requires a more splendid picture than any of the others. Ordinary landscapes and interiors might serve for the rest of the piece; but the Temple of the Sun was evidently intended to dazzle the eyes of all beholders. Now, my theory is that there was a transition period in the course of stage-decoration, during which painted scenes were used only when some special pictorial effect was to be produced, the old system of traverses being retained when nothing of the sort was intended. The *Cruelty to the Spaniards* and the *Siege of Rhodes* were essentially spectacles, and were therefore decorated throughout; the *Indian Queen* was only a spectacle in its last act, and therefore the last act alone was decorated.

Let me test this theory by showing how I would reduce it to practice, if I were a stage-manager required to produce the *Indian Queen*, according to the directions cited above, with no other decoration than the traverses and the scene representing the Temple. In the first act no supposed change of place seems to occur, so I should draw off the front curtains on each side, and reveal the whole stage, undecorated save by drapery. When the front curtains had been again drawn together after the end of the first act, I should close my traverses half way down the stage, the back of which I should conceal, while the front would represent the field of battle. Afterwards, I should withdraw my traverses on each side, and discover Zempoalla on a throne, which could have been put on the back portion of the stage while the business of the battle-field was going on, without placing any painted scene behind it. Having again closed my front curtains at the end of the second act, I should once more draw my traverses together, and turn to account the difference of the stage directions referring to the two discoveries of Zempoalla. In the latter portion (scene, we should say now) of the second act, just concluded, she appears seated on a throne; at the opening of the third, she appears seated on her slaves in triumph; so having arrived at the third act, and having again drawn my traverses together, while the front curtains were closed I should put Zempoalla on the front part of the stage, not seating her as before on a fixed throne, but on the shoulders of the slaves, perhaps on a sort of palanquin. A throne so composed of living materials would break up and disperse of its own accord, when I wanted to clear the stage to make way for the prison of Ismeron, and I should not be driven to the clumsy expedient of pushing off a huge chair in the sight of the audience. My stage direction respecting the imprisonment of Ismeron being comprised in

the words, "Ismeron asleep in the scene," I should draw my traverses not completely off the stage as before, but so as to leave a small opening in the scene, through which the incarcerated man would be discovered. The same arrangement would perhaps suffice for the fourth act, where we find Montezuma in prison, though I would rather discover the whole of the stage, as in the first. While the front curtains were closed after this act, I should set all hands to work with all possible vigour, introducing now my painted scene of the temple at the back, with as many gorgeous properties as I had at command. In short, with respect to the last act, my labours would be precisely those of a stage-manager of the present day.

By this practical illustration, which, I trust, is not tedious, I think I have shown that my theory of the combination of the traverses of one period with the painted scenery of another exactly corresponds to the direction of certain play-books published shortly after the Restoration. In my imaginary capacity of a stage-manager, I have done exactly what my Dryden tells me, neither more nor less.

If reference is made to the theatrical proceedings of London during the period to which I refer, but the later limit of which I cannot as yet specify, it will be seen that my theory implies the hypothesis, that while plays were represented by the Duke's company originally under Davenant, with pictorial illustrations throughout, the combination of pictures and traverses was maintained by the King's company under Killigrew. That painted scenery on a grand scale was first introduced by Davenant, when he opened his house in Lincoln's Inn-fields, is an undisputed fact; and when, after the death of Davenant in 1668, his company moved to Dorset-gardens, their predilection for scenic magnificence increased. The King's company, on the other hand, openly boasted that they did not seek to attract the public by means of splendid accessories, and reviled the Duke's company for pursuing the opposite course. The prologue written for them by Dryden, and spoken on the opening of their new house in March, 1674 (the old one having been destroyed by fire about two years before), commences thus:

A plain-built house, after so long a stay,
Will send you half unsatisfied away:
When fallen from your expected pomp, you find
A bare convenience only is designed.
You who each day can theatres behold,
Like Nero's palace, shining all with gold,
Our mean, ungilded stage will scorn, we fear,
And, for the homely room, disdain the cheer.

Afterwards it proceeds thus:

'Twere folly now a stately pile to raise,
To build a playhouse while you threw down plays,
While scenes, machines, and empty operas reign,
And for the pencil you the pen disdain.

I could not prophesy our house's fate;
But while vain shows and scenes you overrate,
'Tis to be fear'd—
That as a fire the former house o'erthrew,
Machines and tempests will destroy the new.

The last line evidently refers to the production of a modernised version of Shakespeare's *Tempest* (of which perhaps more on a future occasion) at Dorset Gardens, in 1673.

By the supposition that the King's people at Drury Lane were for the most part content with their old-fashioned traverses, only introducing a painted scene when it was absolutely necessary, while all manner of gorgeousness was displayed at Dorset Gardens, we give the greatest possible force to Dryden's prologue. I may observe, however, that I do not believe that painted scenes were *always* employed, even by the Duke's company.

Is it not possible that a combination of traverses, with an occasional painted scene, may have preceded the closing of the theatres by the Puritans? If it did, the difficulty of the passage from Brome's prologue, delivered in 1632, and cited in the paper on "Old Scenes," vanishes at once. When he says:

No gaudy scene

Shall give instruction what the plot doth mean,

we may suppose that he declares his intention to employ traverses only, and not to use the occasional painted scene, which in his time was an innovation, though recognised by the strict conservatives of a late date.

THE HAUNTED ORGANIST OF HURLY BURLY.

THERE had been a thunderstorm in the village of Hurlly Burlly. Every door was shut, every dog in his kennel, every rut and gutter a flowing river after the deluge of rain that had fallen. Up at the great house, a mile from the town, the rooks were calling to one another about the fright they had been in, the fawns in the deer-park were venturing their timid heads from behind the trunks of trees, and the old woman at the gate lodge had risen from her knees, and was putting back her Prayer-book on the shelf. In the garden, July roses, unwildly with their full-blown riotousness, and saturated with rain, hung their heads heavily to the earth; others, already fallen, lay flat upon their blooming faces on the path, where Bess, Mistress Hurlly's maid, would find them when going on her morning quest of rose-leaves for her lady's pot pourri. Ranks of white lilies, just brought to perfection by to-day's sun, lay dabbled in the mire of flooded mould. Tears ran down the amber cheeks of the plums on the south wall, and not a bee had ventured out of the hives, though the scent of the air was sweet enough to tempt the laziest drone. The sky was still lurid behind the boles of the upland oaks, but the birds had begun to dive in and out of the ivy that wrapped up the home of the Hurllys of Hurlly Burlly.

This thunderstorm took place half a century ago, and we must remember that Mistress Hurlly was dressed in the fashion of that time as she crept out from behind the squire's chair, now that the lightning was over, and, with many

nervous glances towards the window, sat down before her husband, the tea-urn, and the muffins. We can picture her fine lace cap, with its peachy ribbons, the frill on the hem of her cambric gown just touching her ankles, the embroidered clocks on her stockings, the rosettes on her shoes, but not so easily the lilac shade of her mild eyes, the satin skin, which still kept its delicate bloom, though wrinkled with advancing age, and the pale, sweet, puckered mouth, that time and sorrow had made angelic while trying vainly to deface its beauty.

The squire was as rugged as his wife was gentle, his skin as brown as hers was white, his grey hair as bristling as hers was glossed; the years had ploughed his face into ruts and channels; a bluff, choleric, noisy man he had been; but of late a dimness had come on his eyes, a hush on his loud voice, and a cheek on the spring of his hale step. He looked at his wife often, and very often she looked at him. She was not a tall woman, and he was only a head higher. They were a quaintly well-matched couple despite their differences. She turned to you with nervous sharpness and revealed her tender voice and eye; he spoke and glanced roughly, but the turn of his head was courteous. Of late they fitted one another better than they had ever done in the heyday of their youthful love. A common sorrow had developed a singular likeness between them. In former years the cry from the wife had been, "Don't curb my son too much!" and from the husband, "You ruin the lad with softness." But now the idol that had stood between them was removed, and they saw each other better.

The room in which they sat was a pleasant old-fashioned drawing-room, with a general spider-legged character about the fittings; spinnet and guitar in their places, with a great deal of copied music beside them; carpet tawny wreaths on blue; blue flutings on the walls, and pale gilding on the furniture. A huge urn, crammed with roses, in the open bay-window, through which came delicious airs from the garden, the twittering of birds settling to sleep in the ivy close by, and occasionally the pattering of a flight of rain-drops, swept to the ground as a bough bent in the breeze. The urn on the table was ancient silver, and the china rare. There was nothing in the room for luxurious ease of the body, but everything of delicate refinement for the eye.

There was a great hush all over Hurly Burly, except in the neighbourhood of the rooks. Every living thing had suffered from heat for the past month, and now, in common with all nature, was receiving the boon of refreshed air in silent peace. The mistress and master of Hurly Burly shared the general spirit that was abroad, and were not talkative over their tea.

"Do you know," said Mistress Hurly, at last, "when I heard the first of the thunder beginning I thought it was—it was——"

The lady broke down, her lips trembling, and the peachy ribbons of her cap stirring with great agitation.

"Pshaw!" cried the old squire, making his cup suddenly ring upon the saucer, "we ought to have forgotten that. Nothing has been heard for three months."

At this moment a rolling sound struck upon the ears of both. The lady rose from her seat trembling, and folded her hands together, while the tea-urn flooded the tray.

"Nonsense, my love," said the squire; "that is the noise of wheels. Who can be arriving?"

"Who, indeed?" murmured the lady, reseating herself in agitation.

Presently pretty Bess of the rose-leaves appeared at the door in a flutter of blue ribbons.

"Please, madam, a lady has arrived, and says she is expected. She asked for her apartment, and I put her into the room that was got ready for Miss Calderwood. And she sends her respects to you, madam, and she'll be down with you presently."

The squire looked at his wife, and his wife looked at the squire.

"It is some mistake," murmured madam. "Some visitor for Calderwood or the Grange. It is very singular."

Hardly had she spoken when the door again opened, and the stranger appeared—a small creature, whether girl or woman it would be hard to say—dressed in a scanty black silk dress, her narrow shoulders covered with a white muslin pelerine. Her hair was swept up to the crown of her head, all but a little fringe hanging over her low forehead within an inch of her brows. Her face was brown and thin, eyes black and long, with blacker settings, mouth large, sweet, and melancholy. She was all head, mouth, and eyes; her nose and chin were nothing.

This visitor crossed the floor hastily, dropped a curtsy in the middle of the room, and approached the table, saying abruptly, with a soft Italian accent:

"Sir and madam, I am here. I am come to play your organ."

"The organ!" gasped Mistress Hurly.

"The organ!" stammered the squire.

"Yes, the organ," said the little stranger lady, playing on the back of a chair with her fingers, as if she felt notes under them. "It was but last week that the handsome signor, your son, came to my little house, where I have lived teaching my music since my English father and my Italian mother and brothers and sisters died and left me so lonely."

Here the fingers left off drumming, and two great tears were brushed off, one from each eye with each hand, child's fashion. But the next moment the fingers were at work again, as if only whilst they were moving the tongue could speak.

"The noble signor, your son," said the little woman, looking trustfully from one to the other of the old couple, while a bright blush shone through her brown skin, "he often came to see me before that, always in the evening, when the sun was warm and yellow all through my little

studio, and the music was swelling up my heart, and I could play out grand with all my soul, then he used to come and say, 'Hurry, little Lisa, and play better, better still. I have work for you to do by-and-by.' Sometimes he said, 'Brava!' and sometimes he said 'Excellentissima!' but one night last week he came to me and said, 'It is enough. Will you swear to do my bidding, whatever it may be?' Here the black eyes fell. And I said, 'Yes.' And he said, 'Now you are my betrothed.' And I said, 'Yes.' And he said, 'Pack up your music, little Lisa, and go off to England to my English father and mother, who have an organ in their house which must be played upon. If they refuse to let you play, tell them I sent you, and they will give you leave. You must play all day, and you must get up in the night and play. You must never tire. You are my betrothed, and you have sworn to do my work.' I said, 'Shall I see you there, signor?' And he said, 'Yes, you shall see me there.' I said, I shall keep my vow, signor.' And so, sir and madame, I am come."

The soft foreign voice left off talking, the fingers left off thrumming on the chair, and the little stranger gazed in dismay at her auditors, both pale with agitation.

"You are deceived. You make a mistake," said they, in one breath.

"Our son——" began Mistress Hurly, but her mouth twitched, her voice broke, and she looked piteously towards her husband.

"Our son," said the squire, making an effort to conquer the quivering in his voice, "our son is long dead."

"Nay, nay," said the little foreigner. "If you have thought him dead, have good cheer, dear sir and madame. He is alive; he is well, and strong and handsome. But one, two, three, four, five" (on the fingers) "days ago he stood by my side."

"It is some strange mistake, some wonderful coincidence!" said the mistress and master of Hurly Burly.

"Let us take her to the gallery," murmured the mother of this son who was thus dead and alive. "There is yet light to see the pictures. She will not know his portrait."

The bewildered wife and husband led their strange visitor away to a long gloomy room at the west side of the house, where the faint gleams from the darkening sky still lingered on the portraits of the Hurly family.

"Doubtless he is like this," said the squire, pointing to a fair-haired young man with a mild face, a brother of his own who had been lost at sea.

But Lisa shook her head and went softly on tiptoe from one picture to another, peering into the canvas, and still turning away troubled. But at last a shriek of delight startled the shadowy chamber.

"Ah, here he is! see, here he is, the noble signor, the beautiful signor, not half so handsome as he looked five days ago when talking to poor little Lisa! Dear sir and madame, you are

now content. Now take me to the organ, that I may commence to do his bidding at once."

The mistress of Hurly Burly clung fast by her husband's arm.

"How old are you, girl?" she said, faintly.

"Eighteen," said the visitor, impatiently, moving towards the door.

"And my son has been dead for twenty years!" said this mother, and swooned on her husband's breast.

"Order the carriage at once," said Mistress Hurly, recovering from her swoon; "I will take her to Margaret Calderwood. Margaret will tell her the story. Margaret will bring her to reason. No, not to-morrow, I cannot bear to-morrow, it is so far away. We must go to-night."

The little signora thought the old lady mad, but she put on her cloak again obediently and took her seat beside Mistress Hurly in the Hurly family coach. The moon that looked in at them through the pane as they lumbered along was not whiter than the aged face of the squire's wife, whose dim faded eyes were fixed upon it in doubt and awe too great for tears or words. Lisa, too, from her corner gazed upon the moon, her black eyes shining with passionate dreams.

A carriage rolled away from the Calderwood door as the Hurly coach drew up at the steps. Margaret Calderwood had just returned from a dinner-party, and at the open door a splendid figure was standing, a tall woman dressed in brown velvet, the diamonds on her bosom glistening in the moonlight that revealed her, pouring, as it did, over the house from eaves to basement. Mistress Hurly fell into her outstretched arms with a groan, and the strong woman carried her aged friend, like a baby, into the house. Little Lisa was overlooked, and sat down contentedly on the threshold to gloat awhile longer on the moon, and to thrum imaginary sonatas on the door-step.

There were tears and sobs in the dusk moonlit room into which Margaret Calderwood carried her friend. There was a long consultation, and then Margaret, having hushed away the grieving woman into some quiet corner, came forth to look for the little dark-faced stranger, who had arrived, so unwelcome, from beyond the seas, with such wild communication from the dead.

Up the grand staircase of handsome Calderwood the little woman followed the tall one into a large chamber where a lamp burned, showing Lisa, if she cared to see it, that this mansion of Calderwood was fitted with much greater luxury and richness than was that of Hurly Burly. The appointments of this room announced it the sanctum of a woman who depended for the interest of her life upon resources of intellect and taste. Lisa noticed nothing but a morsel of biscuit that was lying on a plate.

"May I have it?" said she, eagerly. "It is so long since I have eaten. I am hungry."

Margaret Calderwood gazed at her with a sorrowful, motherly look, and, parting the fringing hair on her forehead, kissed her. Lisa, staring at her in wonder, returned the caress with ardour. Margaret's large fair shoulders, Madonna face, and yellow braided hair, excited a rapture within her. But when food was brought her she flew to it and ate.

"It is better than I have ever eaten at home!" she said, gratefully. And Margaret Calderwood murmured, "She is physically healthy, at least."

"And now, Lisa," said Margaret Calderwood, "come and tell me the whole history of the grand signor who sent you to England to play the organ."

Then Lisa crept in behind a chair, and her eyes began to burn and her fingers to thrum, and she repeated word for word her story as she had told it at Hurly Hurly.

When she had finished, Margaret Calderwood began to pace up and down the floor with a very troubled face. Lisa watched her, fascinated, and, when she bade her to listen to a story which she would relate to her, folded her restless hands together meekly, and listened.

"Twenty years ago, Lisa, Mr. and Mrs. Hurly had a son. He was handsome, like that portrait you saw in the gallery, and he had brilliant talents. He was idolised by his father and mother, and all who knew him felt obliged to love him. I was then a happy girl of twenty. I was an orphan, and Mrs. Hurly, who had been my mother's friend, was like a mother to me. I, too, was petted and caressed by all my friends, and I was very wealthy; but I only valued admiration, riches—every good gift that fell to my share—just in proportion as they seemed of worth in the eyes of Lewis Hurly. I was his affianced wife, and I loved him well.

"All the fondness and pride that were lavished on him could not keep him from falling into evil ways, nor from becoming rapidly more and more abandoned to wickedness, till even those who loved him best despaired of seeing his reformation. I prayed him with tears, for my sake, if not for that of his grieving mother, to save himself before it was too late. But to my horror I found that my power was gone, my words did not even move him, he loved me no more. I tried to think that this was some fit of madness that would pass, and still clung to hope. At last his own mother forbade me to see him."

Here Margaret Calderwood paused, seemingly in bitter thought, but resumed:

"He and a party of his boon companions, named by themselves the 'Devil's Club,' were in the habit of practising all kinds of unholy pranks in the country. They had midnight carousings on the tombstones in the village grave-yard; they carried away helpless old men and children, whom they tortured by making believe to bury them alive; they raised the dead and placed them sitting round the tombstones at a mock feast. On one occasion there was a very sad funeral from the village; the corpse

was carried into the church, and prayers were read over the coffin, the chief mourner, the aged father of the dead man, standing weeping by. In the midst of this solemn scene the organ suddenly pealed forth a profane tune, and a number of voices shouted a drinking chorus. A groan of execration burst from the crowd, the clergyman turned pale and closed his book, and the old man, the father of the dead, climbed the altar steps, and, raising his arms above his head, uttered a terrible curse. He cursed Lewis Hurly to all eternity, he cursed the organ he played, that it might be dumb henceforth, except under the fingers that had now profaned it, which, he prayed, might be forced to labour upon it till they stiffened in death. And the curse seemed to work, for the organ stood dumb in the church from that day, except when touched by Lewis Hurly.

"For a bravado he had the organ taken down and conveyed to his father's house, where he had it put up in the chamber where it now stands. It was also for a bravado that he played on it every day. But, by-and-by, the amount of time which he spent at it daily began to increase rapidly. We wondered long at this whim, as we called it, and his poor mother thanked God that he had set his heart upon an occupation which would keep him out of harm's way. I was the first to suspect that it was not his own will that kept him hammering at the organ so many laborious hours while his boon companions tried vainly to draw him away. He used to lock himself up in the room with the organ, but one day I hid myself among the curtains, and saw him writhing on his seat, and heard him groaning as he strove to wrench his hands from the keys, to which they flew back like a needle to a magnet. It was soon plainly to be seen that he was an involuntary slave to the organ; but whether through a madness that had grown within himself, or by some supernatural doom, having its cause in the old man's curse, we did not dare to say. By-and-by there came a time when we were wakened out of our sleep at nights by the rolling of the organ. He wrought now night and day. Food and rest were denied him. His face got haggard, his beard grew long, his eyes started from their sockets. His body became wasted, and his cramped fingers like the claws of a bird. He groaned piteously as he stooped over his cruel toil. All save his mother and I were afraid to go near him. She, poor, tender woman, tried to put wine and food between his lips while the tortured fingers crawled over the keys, but he only gnashed his teeth at her with curses, and she retreated from him in terror, to pray. At last, one dreadful hour, we found him a ghastly corpse on the ground before the organ.

"From that hour the organ was dumb to the touch of all human fingers. Many, unwilling to believe the story, made persevering endeavours to draw sound from it, but in vain. But when the darkened empty room was locked up and left, we heard as loud as ever the well-known sounds humming and rolling through the walls.

Night and day the tones of the organ boomed on as before. It seemed that the doom of the wretched man was not yet fulfilled, although his tortured body had been worn out in the terrible struggle to accomplish it. Even his own mother was afraid to go near the room then. So the time went on, and the curse of this perpetual music was not removed from the house. Servants refused to stay about the place. Visitors shunned it. The squire and his wife left their home for years, and returned; left it, and returned again, to find their ears still tortured and their hearts wrung by the unceasing persecution of terrible sounds. At last, but a few months ago, a holy man was found, who locked himself up in the cursed chamber for many days, praying and wrestling with the demon. After he came forth and went away the sounds ceased, and the organ was heard no more. Since then there has been peace in the house. And now, Lisa, your strange appearance and your strange story convince us that you are a victim of a ruse of the Evil One. Be warned in time, and place yourself under the protection of God, that you may be saved from the fearful influences that are at work upon you. Come——"

Margaret Calderwood turned to the corner where the stranger sat, as she had supposed, listening intently. Little Lisa was fast asleep, her hands spread before her as if she played an organ in her dreams.

Margaret took the soft brown face to her motherly breast, and kissed the swelling temples, too big with wonder and fancy.

"We will save you from a horrible fate!" she murmured, and carried the girl to bed.

In the morning Lisa was gone. Margaret Calderwood, coming early from her own chamber, went into the girl's room and found the bed empty.

"She is just such a wild thing," thought Margaret, "as would rush out at sunrise to hear the larks!" and she went forth to look for her in the meadows, behind the beech hedges, and in the home park. Mistress Hurly, from the breakfast-room window, saw Margaret Calderwood, large and fair in her white morning gown, coming down the garden-path between the rose-bushes, with her fresh draperies dabbled by the dew, and a look of trouble on her calm face. Her quest had been unsuccessful. The little foreigner had vanished.

A second search after breakfast proved also fruitless, and towards evening the two women drove back to Hurly Burly together. There all was panic and distress. The squire sat in his study with the doors shut, and his hands over his ears. The servants, with pale faces, were huddled together in whispering groups. The haunted organ was pealing through the house as of old.

Margaret Calderwood hastened to the fatal chamber, and there, sure enough, was Lisa, perched upon the high seat before the organ, beating the keys with her small hands, her slight figure swaying, and the evening sun playing about

her weird head. Sweet unearthly music she wrung from the groaning heart of the organ—wild melodies, mounting to rapturous heights and falling to mournful depths. She wandered from Mendelssohn to Mozart, and from Mozart to Beethoven. Margaret stood fascinated awhile by the ravishing beauty of the sounds she heard, but, rousing herself quickly, put her arms round the musician and forced her away from the chamber. Lisa returned next day, however, and was not so easily coaxed from her post again. Day after day she laboured at the organ, growing paler and thinner and more weird-looking as the time went on.

"I work so hard," she said to Mrs. Hurly. "The signor, your son, is he pleased? Ask him to come and tell me himself if he is pleased."

Mistress Hurly got ill and took to her bed. The squire swore at the young foreign baggage, and roamed abroad. Margaret Calderwood was the only one who stood by to watch the fate of the little organist. The curse of the organ was upon Lisa; it spoke under her hand, and her hand was its slave.

At last she announced rapturously that she had had a visit from the brave signor, who had commended her industry, and urged her to work yet harder. After that she ceased to hold any communication with the living. Time after time Margaret Calderwood wrapped her arms about the frail thing, and carried her away by force, locking the door of the fatal chamber. But locking the chamber and burying the key were of no avail. The door stood open again, and Lisa was labouring on her perch.

One night, wakened from her sleep by the well-known humming and moaning of the organ, Margaret dressed hurriedly and hastened to the unholy room. Moonlight was pouring down the staircase and passages of Hurly Burly. It shone on the marble bust of the dead Lewis Hurly, that stood in the niche above his mother's sitting-room door. The organ room was full of it when Margaret pushed open the door and entered—full of the pale green moonlight from the window, mingled with another light, a dull lurid glare which seemed to centre round a dark shadow like the figure of a man standing by the organ, and throwing out in fantastic relief the slight form of Lisa writhing, rather than swaying, back and forward, as if in agony. The sounds that came from the organ were broken and meaningless, as if the hands of the player lagged and stumbled on the keys. Between the intermittent chords low moaning cries broke from Lisa, and the dark figure bent towards her with menacing gestures. Trembling with the sickness of supernatural fear, yet strong of will, Margaret Calderwood crept forward within the radii of the lurid light, and was drawn into its influence. It grew and intensified upon her, it dazzled and blinded her at first, but presently, by a daring effort of will, she raised her eyes and beheld Lisa's face convulsed with torture in the burning glare, and bending over her the figure and the features of Lewis Hurly! Smit-

ten with horror, Margaret did not even then lose her presence of mind. She wound her strong arms around the wretched girl and dragged her from her seat and out of the influence of the lurid light, which immediately paled away and vanished. She carried her to her own bed, where Lisa lay, a wasted wreck, raving about the cruelty of the pitiless signor who would not see that she was labouring her best. Her poor cramped hands kept beating the coverlet, as though she were still at her agonising task.

Margaret Calderwood bathed her burning temples, and placed fresh flowers upon her pillow. She opened the blinds and windows, and let in the sweet morning air and sunshine, and then looking up at the newly awakened sky with its fair promise of hope for the day, and down at the dewy fields, and far off at the dark green woods, with the purple mists still hovering about them, she prayed that a way might be shown her by which to put an end to this curse. She prayed for Lisa, and then, thinking that the girl rested somewhat, stole from the room. She thought that she had locked the door behind her.

She went down-stairs with a pale, resolved face, and, without consulting any one, sent to the village for a bricklayer. Afterwards she sat by Mistress Hurly's bedside, and explained to her what was to be done. Presently she went to the door of Lisa's room, and hearing no sound, thought the girl slept, and stole away. By-and-by she went down-stairs, and found that the bricklayer had arrived and already begun his task of building up the organ-room door. He was a swift workman, and the chamber was soon sealed safely with stone and mortar.

Having seen this work finished, Margaret Calderwood went and listened again at Lisa's door; and still hearing no sound, she returned, and took her seat at Mrs. Hurly's bedside once more. It was towards evening that she at last entered her room to assure herself of the comfort of Lisa's sleep. But the bed and room were empty. Lisa had disappeared.

Then the search began, up-stairs and down-stairs, in the garden, in the grounds, in the fields and meadows. No Lisa. Margaret Calderwood ordered the carriage and drove to Calderwood to see if the strange little will-o'-the-wisp might have made her way there; then to the village, and to many other places in the neighbourhood which it was not possible she could have reached. She made inquiries everywhere, she pondered and puzzled over the matter. In the weak suffering state that the girl was in, how far could she have crawled?

After two days' search, Margaret returned to Hurly Burly. She was sad and tired, and the evening was chill. She sat over the fire wrapped

in her shawl when little Bess came to her, weeping behind her muslin apron.

"If you'd speak to Mistress Hurly about it, please, ma'am," she said. "I love her dearly, and it breaks my heart to go away, but the organ haven't done yet, ma'am, and I'm frightened out of my life, so I can't stay."

"Who has heard the organ, and when?" asked Margaret Calderwood, rising to her feet.

"Please, ma'am, I heard it the night you went away—the night after the door was built up!"

"And not since?"

"No, ma'am," hesitatingly, "not since. Hist! hark, ma'am! Is not that like the sound of it now?"

"No," said Margaret Calderwood; "it is only the wind." But pale as death she flew down the stairs and laid her ear to the yet damp mortar of the newly-built wall. All was silent. There was no sound but the monotonous sough of the wind in the trees outside. Then Margaret began to dash her soft shoulder against the strong wall, and to pick the mortar away with her white fingers, and to cry out for the bricklayer who had built up the door.

It was midnight, but the bricklayer left his bed in the village, and obeyed the summons to Hurly Burly. The pale woman stood by and watched him undo all his work of three days ago, and the servants gathered about in trembling groups, wondering what was to happen next.

What happened next was this: When an opening was made the man entered the room with a light, Margaret Calderwood and others following. A heap of something dark was lying on the ground at the foot of the organ. Many groans arose in the fatal chamber. Here was little Lisa dead!

When Mistress Hurly was able to move, the squire and his wife went to live in France, where they remained till their death. Hurly Burly was shut up and deserted for many years. Lately it has passed into new hands. The organ has been taken down and banished, and the room is a bed-chamber, more luxuriously furnished than any in the house. But no one sleeps in it twice.

Margaret Calderwood was carried to her grave the other day, a very aged woman.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER V. IN THE MUIDERSTRAAT.

HIGH houses, broad, jolly, and red-faced, standing now on the edges of quays or at the feet of bridges, now in quaint trim little gardens, whose close-shaven turf is gaudy with brilliant bulbs, or overshadowed by box and yew, but always fringing the long, shallow, black canals, whose sluggish waters scarcely ripple under the passing barge. Water, water, everywhere, and requiring everybody's first consideration, dammed out by vast dykes and let in through numerous sluices, spanned by nearly three hundred bridges, employing a perfect army of men to watch it and tend it, to avail themselves of its presence and yet to keep it in subjection; for if not properly looked after and skilfully managed, it might at any moment submerge the city; avenues of green trees running along the canal banks and blooming freshly in the thickest portions of the commerce-crowded quays; innumerable windmills on the horizon; picture-galleries rich in treasures of Rubens, Rembrandt, Vandyke, and Teniers; dockyards, where square and sturdy ships are built by square and sturdy men, in solemn silence and with much pipe-smoking; asylums, homes, almshouses, through which a broad stream of well-administered charity is always flowing. A population of grave burghers, and chattering vrows, and the fattest, shiniest, and most old-fashioned children; of outlandish sailors and Jews of the grand old type, who might have sat, and whose ancestors probably did sit, as models to Rembrandt; of stalwart bargemen and canal-tenders, of strangers, some pleasure-seeking, but the great majority intent on business; for whatever may be the solemn delights of its inhabitants, to a stranger accustomed to other capitals there are few gaieties to be met with in the city to which George Dallas had wended his way—Amsterdam.

To George Dallas this mattered very little. Of the grosser kinds of pleasure he had had enough and more than enough; the better feelings of his nature had been awakened, and nothing could have induced him to allow himself to drift back into the slough from which he had

emerged. Wandering through the long picture-galleries and museums, and gloating over their contents with thorough artistic appreciation, dreamily gazing out of his hotel window over a prospect of barge-dotted and tree-towered canals which would gradually dissolve before his eyes, the beech avenue of the sycamores arising in its place, recalling Clare Carruthers's soft voice and ringing laugh and innocent trusting manner, George Dallas could scarcely believe that for months and months of his past life he had been the companion of sharpers and gamblers, and had been cut off from all communication with everything and everybody that in his youth he had been taught to look up to and respect. He shuddered as he recollected the orgies which he had taken part in, the company he had kept, the life he had led. He groaned aloud and stamped with rage as he thought of time lost, character blighted, opportunities missed. And his rage this time was vented on himself: he did not, as usual, curse his step-father for having pronounced his edict of banishment; he did not lay the blame on luck or fate, which generally bore the burden; he was man enough to look his past life fairly in the face, and to own to himself that all its past privations, and what might have been its future miseries, were of his own creation. What might have been, but what should not be now. A new career lay before him, a career of honour and fame, inducements to pursue which such as he had never dreamed of were not wanting, and by Heaven's help he would succeed.

It was on the first morning after his arrival in Amsterdam that George Dallas, after much desultory thought, thus determined. Actuated by surroundings in an extraordinary degree, he had, while in London, been completely fascinated by the combined influence of Routh and Harriet; and had he remained with them he would, probably, never have shaken off that influence, or been anything but their ready instrument. But so soon as he had left them the fascination was gone, and his eyes were opened to the degradation of his position, and the impossibility, so long as he continued with his recent associates, of retrieving himself in the eyes of the world—of being anything to Clare Carruthers. This last thought decided him—he would break with Stewart Routh; yes, and with Harriet, at once! He would sell the bracelet and send the proceeds to Routh with a letter, in which he would delicately but firmly express his determination and take

farewell of him and Harriet. Then he would return to London, and throw himself into business at once. There was plenty for him to do at *The Mercury*, the chief had said, and—No! he must not go back to London, he must not expose himself to temptation; at all events, until he was more capable of resisting it. Now, there would be Routh, with his jovial blandishments, and Deane, and all the set, and Harriet, most dangerous of all! In London he would fall back into George Dallas, the outcast, the reprobate, the black sheep, not rise into Paul Ward, the genius; and it was under the latter name that he had made acquaintance with Clare, and that he hoped to rise into fame and repute.

But though the young man had, as he imagined, fully made up his mind as to his future course, he lounged through a whole day in Amsterdam before he took the first step necessary for its pursuance—the negotiation of the bracelet and the transmission of the money to Routh—and it is probable that any movement in the matter would have been yet further delayed had he not come to the end of the slender stock of money which he had brought with him from England. The reaction from a life of fevered excitement to one of perfect calm, the atmosphere of comfortable, quiet, staid tranquillity by which he was surrounded, the opportunity for indulging his artistic sympathies without the slightest trouble, all these influences were readily adopted by a man of George Dallas's desultory habits and easy temperament; but, at last, it was absolutely necessary that some action should be taken, and George consulted the polyglot waiter of the hotel as to the best means of disposing of some valuable diamonds which he had with him.

The question was evidently one to which the polyglot waiter was well accustomed, for he answered at once, "Diamants to puy is best by Mr. Dieverbrug, in *Muiderstraat*."

Not thoroughly comprehending the instance of the polyglotness of the polyglot, George Dallas again advanced to the charge, and by varying his methods of attack, and diligently patching together such intelligible scraps as he rescued from the polyglot, he at length arrived at the fact that Mr. Dieverbrug, a Jew, who lived in the *Muiderstraat*, was a diamond merchant in a large way of business, speaking English, frequently visiting England, and likely to give as good, if not a better price than any one else in the trade. The polyglot added that he himself was not a bad judge of what he persisted in calling "*diamants*;" and as this speech was evidently a polite hint, George showed him the stones. The polyglot admired them very much, and pronounced them, in his opinion, worth between two and three hundred pounds—a valuable hint to George, who expected Mr. Dieverbrug would call upon him to name his price, and if any absurd sum was asked, the intending vendor might be looked upon with suspicion. The polyglot then owned that he himself frequently did a little business in the way of jewel-purchasing

from visitors to the hotel, but frankly confessed that the "*lot*" under consideration was beyond him; so George thanked him and set out to visit Mr. Dieverbrug.

The *Muiderstraat* is the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, which said, it is scarcely necessary to add that it is the dirtiest, the foulest, the most evil-smelling. There all the well-known characteristics of such places flourish more abundantly even than in the *Frankfort Judengasse* or our own *Houndsditch*. There each house is the repository of countless suits of fusty clothes, heaped up in reckless profusion on the floors, bulging out from cupboards and presses, horribly suggestive of vermin, hanging from poles protruded from the windows. There every cellar bristles with an array of boots of all kinds and shapes, amongst which the little Hebrew children squall, and fight, and play at their little games of defrauding each other. There are the bric-à-brac shops, crammed with cheap odds and ends from every quarter of the globe, all equally undistinguishable under an impartial covering of dust and dirt; there are the booksellers, with their wormeaten folios and their copies of the Scriptures, and their written announcements in the Hebrew character; there are the cheap printsellers, with smeary copies from popular pictures and highly-coloured daubs of French battle-fields and English hunting-scenes. The day was fine, and nearly all the population was either standing outside its doors or lolling at its windows, chaffering, higgling, joking, scolding. George Dallas, to whom such a scene was an entire novelty, walked slowly along with difficulty, threading his way through the various groups, amused with all he saw, and speculating within himself as to the probable personal appearance of Mr. Dieverbrug. The diamond-merchant, George imagined, would probably be an old man, with grey hair and spectacles, and a large hooked nose, like one of Rembrandt's "*Misers*," seated in a small shop, surrounded by the rarest treasures exquisitely set. But when he arrived at the number which the polyglot had given him as Mr. Dieverbrug's residence, he found a small shop indeed, but it was a bookseller's, and it was not until after some little time that he spied a painted inscription on the door-post, directing Mr. Dieverbrug's visitors to the first floor, whither George at once proceeded.

At a small wooden table, on which stood a set of brass balance weights, sat a man of middle height and gentlemanly appearance, dressed in black. The Hebraic character was not strongly marked in any of his features, though it was perceptible to an acute observer in the aquiline nose and the full red lips. He raised his eyes from a small red leather memorandum-book or diary which he had been studying as Dallas entered the room, and gave his visitor a grave salutation.

"Am I addressing Mr. Dieverbrug?" said Dallas, in English.

"I am Mr. Dieverbrug," he replied, in the same language, speaking with perfect ease and

with very little foreign accentuation, "at your service."

"I have been recommended to come to you. I am, as you have probably already recognised, an Englishman, and I have some jewels for sale, which it may, perhaps, suit you to buy."

"You have them with you?"

"Yes, they are here;" and George took out his cherished case and placed it in Mr. Dieverbrug's hand.

Mr. Dieverbrug opened the case quietly, and walked with it towards the window. He then took out the stones and held them to the light, then taking from his waistcoat-pocket a small pair of steel nippers, he picked up each stone separately, breathed upon it, examined it attentively, and then replaced it in the case. When he had gone through this operation with all the stones, he said to George:

"You are not a diamond merchant?"

"No, indeed!" said Dallas, with a half-laugh; "not I."

"You have never," said Mr. Dieverbrug, looking at him steadfastly from under his bushy eyebrows—"you have never been in a jewel-house?"

"In a jewel-house?" echoed George.

"What you call a jeweller's shop?"

"Never have been in a jeweller's shop? Oh yes, often."

"Still you fail my meaning. You have never been in a jeweller's shop as employé, as assistant?"

"Assistant at a jeweller's—ah, thank you! now I see what you're aiming at. I've never been an assistant in a jeweller's shop, you ask, which is a polite way of inquiring if I robbed my master of these stones! Thank you very much; if you've that opinion of me, perhaps I had better seek my bargain elsewhere." And George Dallas, shaking all over, and very much flushed in the face, extended his hand for the case.

Mr. Dieverbrug smiled softly as he said, "If I had thought that, I would have bid you go about your business at once. There are plenty of merchants at Amsterdam who would buy from you, no matter whence you came; but it is my business to ask such questions as to satisfy myself. Will you have back your diamonds, or shall I ask my questions?"

He spoke in so soft a tone, and he looked so placid and so thoroughly uncaring which way the discussion ended, that George Dallas could scarcely forbear laughing as he replied, "Ask away!"

"Ask away," repeated Mr. Dieverbrug, still with his soft smile. "Well, then, you are not a jeweller's employé; I can tell that by your manner, which also shows me that you are not what you call swell-mob-man—rascal—escroc. So you come to me with valuable diamonds to sell; my questions are. How do you get these diamonds? Who are you?"

For an instant George Dallas paused in his reply, while he felt the blood rise in his cheeks. He next looked Mr. Dieverbrug straight in the

face as he said, "These were family diamonds. I inherited them from my mother—who is dead—and I was advised to come over here to sell them, this being the best market. As to myself, I am a literary man, a contributor to newspapers, and an author."

"Ah, ha! you write in newspapers and books? You are feuilletonist, author?" And as Mr. Dieverbrug said these words, he took up a stick which stood by the side of the fireplace and thumped heavily on the floor. His thumping seemed to awaken a kind of smothered response from the regions below them, and before George Dallas had recovered from his surprise the door was opened, and an old gentleman of fantastic appearance entered the room—a very little man, with an enormous head, which was covered with a tight-fitting little skull-cap, large eyes glaring out of silver-rimmed spectacles, a sallow puckered face fringed with a short stubbly white beard, a large aquiline nose, and thin tight lips. Buttoning immediately under his chin and reaching to his feet—no very long distance—the little man wore a greasy red flannel gaberдинe dressing-gown, with flat horn buttons in a row down the front, underneath which appeared a dubiously dirty pair of flannel stockings and bright red leather slippers. With one hand the little man leaned on an ivory-handled crutch stick; in the other he carried a yellow-paper covered book—Tauchnitz edition of some English author. As he entered the room he gave a sharp, rapid, comprehensive glance at George through his spectacles, made him a deferential bow, and then took up his position in the closest proximity to Mr. Dieverbrug, who at once addressed him in Dutch with such volubility that George, who had managed to pick up a few words during his stay, from the polyglot and others, failed to comprehend one syllable of what passed between them.

When they had finished their parley, during which both of them looked at the diamonds and then at George, and then waved their fingers in each other's faces, and beat the palms of their hands, and shrugged their shoulders as though they never intended their heads to be again seen, Mr. Dieverbrug turned to George, and said, "This is my brother-in-law, Mr. Schaub, who keeps the bookseller's shop beneath us. He is agent for some English booksellers and newspapers, and knows more about authors than you would think. I should be glad if you would have some talk with him."

"Glad I should have some talk with him?" George Dallas commenced in wonderment; but Mr. Schaub cut in at once:

"Ye-es! Vos glad should have tokes mit eem! Should mit eem converse—sprechen, dis English author!"

"English author?"

"M-ja! m-ja! Wass him, der Schaub"—tapping himself in the middle of his greasy breast with his ivory-handled crutch—"a-agent von Tauchnitz, Galignani, die London Times, die Mercury, and von all. Wass der Schaub

knows all, and der Mynheer is English author, der Schaub must know von the Mynheer!"

George Dallas looked at him for a few moments in great bewilderment, then turned to Mr. Dieverbrug. "Upon my honour," he said, "I should be delighted to carry out your wish and have some talk with this old gentleman, but I don't see my way to preventing the conversation being all on his side. The fact is, I don't understand one word he says!"

With the old sly smile, Mr. Dieverbrug said, "My brother-in-law's talk is perhaps somewhat idiomatic, and one is required to be used to it. What he would convey is, that he, acquainted as he is with English literature and journalism, would like to know what position you hold in it, what you have written, where you have been engaged, and such-like. It is no object of us to disguise to you that he brings his experience to aid me in deciding whether or not I consider myself justified in making a dealing with you for these stones."

"Thanks! I comprehend perfectly, and, of course, cannot object; though," added George, with a smile, "I am afraid I have not as yet made sufficient mark in English literature to render me a classic, or even to have gained a continental reputation for my name. Stay, though. Mr. Schaub, if I understood him rightly, represented himself as agent for one London paper to which I have contributed under my signature—the Mercury. You know the Mercury, Mr. Schaub? I thought so, and perhaps you have seen some articles there signed Paul Ward?"

"M-ja! m-ja! Wass von die 'Strangers in London,' von Paul Ward, am Nordjten, Hollandischen, Deutschen sea-people, von zailors would call zum visitiren?"

"That's it, sir! Descriptions," continued George, turning to Mr. Dieverbrug, "of the foreign sea-going populations of London."

"M-ja, of Highway, of Shadeliffe, Rateliffe, Shadwell, vot you call! M-ja, of Paul Ward writings I am acquaint."

"And you are Paul Ward?" asked Mr. Dieverbrug.

"I am that apparently distinguished person," said George.

Then Mr. Dieverbrug and Mr. Schaub plunged pell-mell into another conversation, in which, though the tongues rattled volubly enough, the shoulders, and the eyebrows, and the fingers played almost as important parts, the result being that Mr. Dieverbrug turned to George and said, "I am quite satisfied to undertake this affair, Mr. Ward, from what my brother-in-law has said of your position. Another question is, what shall I give you for the stones?"

"From what your brother-in-law has said of my position, Mr. Dieverbrug," said George, "it will, I presume, be apparent to you that I am not likely to be much versed in such matters, and that I must, to a great extent, be dependent on you."

"But you have some notion of price?"

"I have a notion—nothing more."

"And that notion is——?"

"Well, I imagine the worth of the stones is about two hundred and fifty pounds!"

At these words Mr. Schaub gave a short sharp scream of horror, plunging his hands up to the elbows in the pockets of the red flannel gaberdrine, and glaring at George through the silver-rimmed glasses. Mr. Dieverbrug was not so wildly affected; he only smiled the soft smile a little more emphatically than before, and said:

"There is now no doubt, my dear sir, even if we had doubted it before, of your living in the region of romance! These must be Monte Christo diamonds, of M. Dumas's own setting, to judge by the value you place on them—eh?"

"Wass won hondert fifty is vat worths," said Mr. Schaub.

But, fortified in his own mind by the opinion of the polyglot waiter, who evidently had not spoken without some knowledge, George at once and peremptorily declined his bid, and so to work they went. The stones were had out again, re-examined, weighed in the brass balances, breathed upon, held up to the light between the steel pincers, and, at length, after a sharp discussion, carried on with most vivid pantomime between the brothers-in-law, Mr. Dieverbrug consented to buy them for one hundred and eighty pounds, and George Dallas accepted his offer. Then from the recesses of a drawer in the little wooden table Mr. Dieverbrug produced a cash-box and counted out the sum in Dutch coin and gulden notes, and handing it to George; and shaking hands with him, the transaction was completed.

Completed, so far as Mr. Dieverbrug was concerned; but Mr. Schaub had yet an interest in it. That worthy followed George Dallas down the stairs, and, as he would have made his exit, drew him into the bookseller's shop—a dark dirty den of a place, with old mildewed folios littering the floor, with new works smelling of print and paper ranged along the counter, with countless volumes pile on pile heaped against the walls. With his skinny yellow hand resting on George's sleeve, the old man stood confronting George in the midst of the heterogeneous assemblage, and peering up into his face through the silver-rimmed glasses, said:

"And so he vos Paul Vart—eh? Dis young man vos Paul Vart, von London aus? And Paul Vart vill back to London, and Hollandisch money no good there—eh? Best change for English, and der old Schaub shall change for eem—eh?"

"I'm not going back to London, Mr. Schaub," said George, after a few moments' puzzling over the old man's meaning. "I'm not going back to London; but I shall want to change this money, as I must send some of it, the larger portion, to England by to-night's post, and I am going to the bank to change it."

"Wass! der bank! der nonsense! It is the old Schaub vot vill change! Give de goot rates and all! Ach, der old Schaub vot has der English bank-note to send mit dem postrager!

Der old Schaub vot den miser dey call! Der Schaub vill change die gulden for den bank-notes, m-ja?"

"It does not matter to me much who changes it, so long as I get the proper value!" said George, with a laugh, "and if the old Schaub, as you call yourself, can give me bank-notes for a hundred and forty pounds, I'll say done with you at once!"

"Wass vat was 'done' mit me for hundert forty pounds! See—first will make the door to. Let das folk call miser old Schaub, but not let das folk see vot old Schaub misers. Ha, ha!"

So saying, the old gentleman closed the door of the shop and locked it carefully. Then he retired to the back of the counter, removed several heavy old books from one of the shelves, and unlocked a secret closet in the wall. When he turned again to George, whom he had left on the other side of the counter, he had a little roll of English bank-notes in his hand. From this he selected four notes—two of the value of fifty and two of twenty pounds. These he handed to Dallas, receiving the equivalent in Dutch money.

"I am very much obliged to you indeed, Mr. Schaub," said George. "By doing this for me, you've saved my going to the bank, and a good deal of trouble."

"Obliged to him is not at all, mein goot freund Vart—Paul Vart," said the old gentleman. "Miser das folk calls old Schaub, but it is not that; he has his leetle commissions, vy not he as well as banks? Goot deal of money pass through old Schaub's hands, and of vot pass none go clean through, always von little sh_ticks to him fingers!"

That night George Dallas wrote to Stewart Routh, enclosing him the money, and telling him that literary engagements had sprung up which might perhaps keep him some little time from London. The letter despatched, he felt a different man. The tie was loosed, the coupling-chain was broken! No longer enthralled by a debt of gratitude to vice, he could try what he could do to make a name—a name which his mother should not blush to hear—a name which should be murmured with delight by Clare Carruthers!

CHAPTER VI. IDLESSE.

WHEN George Dallas had relieved his conscience by despatching the money to Routh, he felt that he had sufficiently discharged a moral duty to enable him to lie fallow for a little time and reflect upon the excellence of the deed, without immediately pushing forward on that career of stern duty which he had prescribed for himself. In his desultory frame of mind, it afforded him the greatest pleasure to sit apart in the quaintly trimmed gardens or on the shady quays idly looking on the life passing before him, thinking that he was no longer in the power of those who had so long exercised an evil influence over him, and recollecting that

out of the balance of the sum which he had received from Mr. Dieverbrug he had enough left to keep him without any absolute necessity for resorting to work for some little time to come. For George Dallas was essentially an idler and a dreamer, an intending well-doer, but steeped to the lips in procrastination, and without the smallest knowledge of the realities of life. He had hopes and ambitions, newly kindled as one might say; honest aspirations, such as in most men would have proved spurs to immediate enterprise; but George Dallas lay about on the seats of the public gardens, or leaned against the huge trees bordering the canals, and as he puffed into the air the light blue smoke and watched it curling and eddying above his head, he thought how delightful it would be to see Clare Carruthers blushing with delight at his literary success; he pictured himself telling her how he had at last succeeded in making a name, and how the desire of pleasing her had been his greatest incentive; he saw his mother trembling and joyous, his step-father with his arms open and his cheque-book at his step-son's disposal; he had a dim vision of Amherst church, and flower-strewing maidens, and ringing bells, and cheering populace;—and then he puffed out a little more smoke, and thought that he really must begin to think about getting into harness again.

As a first step to this desirable result, he paid his bill at the Amsterdam hotel and started off for the Hague, where he remained for a fortnight, enjoying himself in the laziest and pleasantest manner, lounging in the picture-gallery and the royal library, living remarkably well, smoking a great deal, and thinking about Clare Carruthers, and in odd half hours, after breakfast or before he went to bed, doing a little literary work, transcribing of his day's observations, which he sent to *The Mercury* with a line to Grafton Leigh, telling him that private affairs had necessitated his coming abroad, but that when he returned he would keep the promise he had made of constant contributions to the paper; meanwhile, he sent a few sketches just to keep his hand in. In reply to this letter he received a communication from his friend Cunningham, telling him that his chief was much pleased with the articles, and would be glad, as George was so near, if he would go over to Amsterdam and write an account of the starting of the fleet for the herring-fishery—an event which was just about to come off, and which, owing to special circumstances at the time, excited a peculiar interest in England. In this letter, Cunningham enclosed another, which he said had been for some time lying at the office, and which, on opening, George found to be from the proprietors of *The Piccadilly*, presenting their compliments to Mr. Paul Ward, stating that they were recommended by their "literary adviser," who was much struck by the brilliancy and freshness of so much of Mr. Paul Ward's serial story as had been sent in, to accept that story for their magazine, regretting that Mr. Ward's name was not yet sufficiently well known to enable

them to give the sum he had named as his price, but offering him, on the whole, very handsome terms.

So, it had come at last! No longer to struggle on, a wretched outsider, a component of the "ruck" in the great race for name, and fame, and profit, but one of the select, taking the leading place in the leading periodical of the day, with the chance, if fortune favoured him, and he could only avail himself of the opportunity so long denied, and call into action the influences so long prompting him, of rendering himself from month to month an object of interest, a living something, an actual necessity to thousands of people whose faces he should never see, and who would yet know of him and look with the deepest interest on the ideal creatures of his fancy. Pardon the day-dream now, for the good to be derived from action is now so real, so tangible, that the lotos-leaves shall soon be cast aside. And yet how fascinating is the vision which their charm has ever evoked for the young man bound under their spell! Honour, wealth, fame, love! not all your riches, Capel Carruthers, not your county position, not your territorial influence, not your magisterial dignity, nor anything else on which you pride yourself, shall be half as sweet to you as the dignified pride of the man who looks around him, and seeing himself possessed of all these enviable qualities, says: "By my own hand, by the talent which God has given me, and by his help alone, unaided by birth, or riches, or influence, I have made myself what I am!" The crisis in George Dallas's life had arrived, the ball was at his feet, and with the opportunity so urgent on him, all his desultoriness, all his lazy dilettanteism, vanished. He felt at last that life was real and earnest, and determined to enter upon it at once. With what big schemes his heart was filled, with what quixotic dreams his brain was bursting! In his own mind his triumphant position in the future was so assured, that he could not resist taking an immediate foretaste of his happiness, and so on the very day of the receipt of Cunningham's letter a box containing some very rare Japanese fans, screens, and china, was despatched anonymously, addressed to Miss Carruthers. The cost of these trifles barely left George Dallas enough to pay his fare back to Amsterdam. But what of that? Was he not on the high road to fortune, and could he not make money as he liked?

The polyglot waiter received him, if not with open arms, at least with a smiling face and a babble of many-tongued welcomes, and placed in his hands a letter which had been more than a week awaiting him. George glanced at its superscription, and a shadow crossed his face as he recognised Ruth's handwriting. He had looked upon that connexion as so completely cut asunder, that he had forgotten his last communication necessitated a reply—an acknowledgment of the receipt of the money at least—and he opened the letter with an undefined sensation of annoyance. He read as follows:

S. M. Street, June —, 18—.

"Your letter, my dear George, and its enclosure is 'to hand,' as we say in Tokenhouse-yard, and I flatter myself that you, who know something of me, and who have seen inside my waistcoat, know that I am highly pleased at the return you have made for what you ridiculously term my 'enormous kindness,' and at the feeling which has prompted you, at, I am certain, some self-sacrifice, to return me the sum which I was only too pleased to be able to place at your disposal. I am a bad hand, as you, great author, literary swell, &c. &c., will soon see—I am a bad hand at fencing off what I have got to say, and therefore I must out with it at once. I know it ought to be put in a postscript—just dropped *par hasard*, as though it were an afterthought and not the real gist of the letter—but I do not understand that kind of 'caper,' and so must say what I have got to say in my own way. So look here! I am ten years older than you in years and thirty years in experience, and I know what heart-burnings and worries, not merely for yourself alone, but for others very very dear to you, you have had in raising this money which you have sent to me. You thought it a debt of honour, and consequently moved heaven and earth to discharge it, and you knew that I was hard up—a fact which had an equally irritating effect on you. Now, look here! (I have said that before, I see; but never mind!) As to the honour—Well, not to mince matters, it was a gambling debt, *pur et simple*; and when I reflect, as I do sometimes—Harriet knows that, and will tell you so—I know well enough that but for me you would never have been led into gambling. I am not preaching, old fellow; I am simply speaking the honest truth. Well, the thought that you have had all this to go through, and such a large sum of money to pay, yerks me and goes against the grain. And then, as to my being hard up, I don't mind telling you—of course in the strictest confidence—that Tokenhouse-yard is a tremendous success! It was a tight time some months ago, and no mistake; but I think we have weathered the storm, and the money is rolling in there splendidly; so splendidly and so rapidly, that—again in the strictest confidence—I am thinking of launching out a little and taking up the position which—you'll know I'm not bragging, old boy—my birth and education warrant me in assuming. I have grovelled on long enough, Heaven knows, and I want to see myself, and, above all, I want to see my wife, out of the reach of—Well, I need not dilate to you on what circumstances have lowered us to, and what we will now float above. So, as good luck is nothing unless one's friends share in it, I want to say to you, as delicately as I can, 'Share in mine!' Don't be in a hurry to send me back that money, don't be too proud—that's not the word, George—I should say, don't fear to remain in my debt, and, if occasion should arise, let me be your banker for further sums. I can stand

the racket, and shall be only too glad to be called upon to do so, as some slight way of atoning for having led you into what cannot be looked upon by any one, I am afraid, as a reputable life. I won't say any more on this head, because there is no need. You will know that I am in earnest in what I have said, and you will receive the fifty pounds which I have enclosed herein in the spirit in which they are sent—that of true friendship. You will be a great gun some day, if you fulfil the promise made for you by those who ought to know about it; and then you will repay me. Meanwhile, depend on it that any draft of yours on me will be duly honoured.

"And so you are not coming back to London for some time? It seems an ungenerous thing in a friend to say, but upon my soul I think it the wisest thing you can do is to remain abroad, and widen your knowledge of life. You have youth and health, at your time of life the powers of observation are at their freshest and strongest, all you will want is money, and that you shan't want, if you accede to the suggestion I have just made. You will store your mind in experience, you will see all sorts and varieties of men, and as you have nothing particular to bind you to England, you could thoroughly enjoy your freedom, and return with a valuable stock of ideas for the future benefit of the British reading public. *Allez toujours, la jeunesse!* which, under its familiar translation of 'Go it while you're young!' is the best advice I can give you, George, my dear boy. During your absence, you will have shaken off all your old associations, and who knows but that the great bashaw, your step-father, may clasp you to his bosom, and leave all his acres to his dearly beloved step-son, G. D.? Only one thing! You must not forget Harry, and you must not forget me! If all works right, you will find us very differently situated from what you have ever known us, and you won't be ashamed to recognise us as friends. You would laugh if you could see me now, emphatically a 'City man,' wearing Oxford mixture trousers and carrying a shabby fat umbrella, which is an infallible sign of wealth, eating chops in the middle of the day, solemnly rebuking my young clerks for late attendance at the office, and comporting myself generally with the greatest gravity and decorum. And to think that we once used to 'back the caster,' and have, in our time, held point, quint, and quatorze. Tell it not in Gath! By advices last received, the produce of the mines has been twenty-two thousand oitavas, the gain whereof is, &c. &c.' That's the style now!

"Harriet is well, and, as ever, my right hand. To see her at work over the books at night, one would think she had been born in the Brazils, and had never heard of anything but silver mines. She sends kindest regards, and is fully of my opinion as to the expediency of your staying away from London. No news of Deane; but that does not surprise me. His association with us was entirely one of concurrence, and he always talked of himself as a wanderer—a bird

of passage. I suppose he did not give you any hint of his probable movements on the day of the dinner, when I had the ill-luck to offend him by not coming? No one ever knew where he lived, or how, so I can't make any inquiries. However, it's very little matter.

"And now I must make an end of this long story. Good-bye, my dear George. All sorts of luck, and jollity, and happiness attend you, but in the enjoyment of them all don't forget the pecuniary proposition I have made to you, and think sometimes kindly of

"Your sincere

"STEWART ROUTH."

A little roll of paper had dropped from the letter when George opened it. He picked it up, and found two Bank of England notes for twenty pounds, and one for ten pounds.

It is no discredit to George Dallas to avow that when he had finished the perusal of this quaint epistle, and when he looked at its enclosure, he had a swelling in his throat, a quivering in the muscles of his mouth, and thick heavy tears in his eyes. He was very young, you see, and very impressionable, swaying hither and thither with the wind and the stream, unstable as water, and with very little power of adhering to any determination, however right and laudable it seemed at the first blush. There are few of us—in early youth, at all events, let us trust—who are so clear-headed, and far-seeing, and right-hearted, as to be able to do exactly what Duty prescribes to us—the shutting out all promptings of inclination! Depend upon it the good boys in the children's story-books, those juvenile patterns who went unwaveringly to the Sunday-school, shutting their eyes to the queen-cakes and toffy so temptingly displayed on the roadside, and who were adamant in the matter of telling a fib, though by so doing they might have saved their schoolfellow a flogging—depend upon it they turned out, for the most part, very bad men, who robbed the orphans and ground the faces of the widows. George Dallas was but a man, very warm-hearted, very impressionable, and when he read Stewart Routh's letter he repented of his harshness to his friend, and accused himself of having been precipitate and ungenerous. Here was the blackleg, the sharper, the gambler, actually returning some of his legitimate winnings, and placing his purse at his acquaintance's disposal, while his step-father—But then that would not bear thinking about! Besides, his step-father was Clare's uncle; no kindness of Routh's would ever enable him, George, to make progress in that direction, and therefore—And yet it was deuced kind in Routh to be so thoughtful. The money came so opportunely, too, just when, what with his Hague excursion and his purchases, he had spent the balance of the sum derived from the sale of the bracelet, and it would have been scarcely decent to ask for an advance from The Mercury office or The Pica-dilly people. But it was a great thing that Routh advised him to keep away from Eng-

land for a time—a corroboration, too, of Routh's statement that he was going into a different line of life—for of course with his new views an intimacy with Routh would be impossible, whereas he could now let it drop quietly. He would accept the money so kindly sent him, and he would do the account of the herring fishery for *The Mercury*, and he would get on with the serial story for *The Piccadilly*, and—Well, he would remain where he was and see what turned up. The quiet, easy-going, dreamy life suited George to a nicety; and if he had been a little older, and had never seen *Clare Carruthers*, he might, on very little provocation, have accepted the Dutch far niente as the realisation of human bliss.

So, having to remain in Holland for some few days longer, and needing some money for immediate spending, George Dallas bethought him of his old friend Mr. Schaub, and strolled to the *Muiderstraat* in search of him. He found the old gentleman seated behind his counter, bending over an enormous volume in the Hebrew character, over the top of which he glared through the silver-rimmed spectacles at his visitor with anything but an inviting glance. When, however, he recognised George, which he did comparatively quickly, his forbidding look relaxed, he put down the book, and began nodding in a galvanised manner, rubbing the palms of his hands together, and showing the few fangs left in his mouth.

"Vat! Vart—Paul Vart! you here still? Wass you not 'back gone to your own land, Vart? You do no more vairsk, Vart, you vaste your time in Amsterdam, Vart—Paul Vart!"

"No; not that," said George, laughing; "I have not gone home, certainly, but I've not lost my time. I've been seeing to your country and studying character. I've been to the Hague."

"Ja, ja! the Hague! and, like your countrymen, you have bought their *die Japans*, *die dogues*, and *punch-bowls*. Ja, ja!"

George admitted the fact as to *japan-ware* and *china dogs*, but denied the *punch-bowls*.

"Ja, ja!" groaned Mr. Schaub; "and here in dis house I could have sold you straight same, *de straight same*, and you save your money for journey to Hague."

"Well, I haven't saved the money," said George, with a laugh, "but I dare say I shall be able to make something of what I saw there. You'll be pleased to hear I am going to write a story for *The Piccadilly*—they've engaged me."

"Wass Peek-a-teelies wass goot, ver goot," said Mr. Schaub; "better as *Mercury*—bigger, higher, more stand!"

"Ah! but you mustn't run down *The Mercury*, either. They've asked me to write a description of the sailing of your herring-fleet. So I must stop here for a few days, and I want you to change me a Bank of England note."

"Ja, ja! with pleasure! Wass always likes dis Bank of England notes; ist goot, and clean, and so better as dirty *Austrisch Prussich* money. Ah! he is not the same as I give you

other day! He is quite new and clean for twenty pounds! Ja, ja!" he added, after holding the note up to the light, "his vater-mark is right! A. F.! *Vot is A. F.*, 17 April? Ah, you don't know! You don't become it from A. F.? Course not! Vell, vell, let me see *die course of 'Change*—denn I put him into my leetle stock von English bank-note!"

The old man took up a newspaper that lay on the counter before him and consulted it, made a rapid calculation on a piece of paper, and was about to turn round towards the drawer where, as George remembered, he kept his cash-box, when he stopped, handed George the pen from behind his ear, dipped it into the ink, and said:

"Vell, just write his name, Vart—Paul Vart, on his back—m-ja? And his date of month. So! Vart—Paul Vart!—m-ja! ist goot. Here's *die guldens*."

George Dallas swept the gold pieces into his pocket, nodded to the old man, and left the shop. Mr. Schaub carefully locked away the note, made an entry of its number and amount in his ledger, and resumed his reading.

THE SOLDIER TIRED.

ABOUT eleven o'clock on the morning of the eighth of September last, an old and bent man, of uncertain gait, feebly felt his way with a stick, along an unfamiliar path. It was the veteran *Waterloo-man*,* whose history was told in these pages in August last, taking his departure from the "House," in which he had been permitted to pass some six years of his old age, as a national reward for fighting against "Boney" in his youth.

The old man's dress was as quaint as his gait. A blue pilot overcoat, much too long for him, and all "mote-eaten," as he described it, formed the principal feature. A long-furred imitation beaver hat, brushed backwards, a pair of yellow corduroys, a blue cotton necktie, a small bundle, and a gnarled and knotted walking-stick, completed the costume. These clothes would have been a little singular at any time; but there was an air about them not belonging to other clothes of even the same kind. They had been laid up in the workhouse stores of "paupers' own clothes" for six years; and, naturally, they wore an unnatural air.

The wearer of these singular habiliments picked his way—he is three-parts blind—to the writer's house, where his outer man was photographed, and his inner man refreshed. Subsequently he was supplied with two sets of every article necessary in the way of clothing from a convenient "ready-made" shop; a fortnight's temporary allowance was paid him; and, while he was waiting for the carrier to call and take him and his new stock of clothes to his native village, he had a word or two to say.

* See WATERLOO AND THE WORKHOUSE, page 125 of the present volume.

"Well, sir, the first thing as I heered about going out was early a Sunday morning [19th of August], when Mr. Nameless says to me, 'Why, Oliver, you seems to find yourself discontented and dissatisfied here.'"

"'No, sir,' I says; 'I ain't discontented nor yet dissatisfied.'"

"He says: 'You'll not get provided for as well as you are here, under ten shillings a week.'"

"I says: 'I can get provided for very cheap out.'"

"'You ain't wanted out,' he says. He seemed ruffled, like; but he have been very mild wi' me since, and shook hands wi' me when I came out."

"It wasn't the food altogether as made me want to get out. I am getting old and feeble, and should often be glad to lay an extry hour in the morning when I don't feel well. But you must be *very* bad here to be allowed to lay in bed beyond the reg'lar time. Besides, I so longed to be with my own people—partickler a Sunday."

"Next Monday morning—that is, Monday week [August 27]—Nameless came to me and said, 'You're to go to Oxford next Monday.' I was a little frustrated, for I didn't know what it was about; and it was said as if I was to go for doing summut wrong. But I knowed as I hadn't done nothing wrong. By-and-by I see the poorter, and he tells me as the sergeant had been there a speaking to him. After I'd seen the poorter, I thought my going to Oxford had something to do with what you was a-telling me on; and I was a little more reconciled."

"Next day was board-day, and the gentlemen came round. One asked me, 'Was I discontented? Why did I wish to go out?'"

"'No, sir,' I says, 'I ain't discontented; but I should like to lie down in peace in my native village, and be with those as is dear to me.'"

"On the 3rd of September, as you know, sir, I went to Oxford. The sergeant and me walked to the station—pretty well three miles I should think it is. We went by the railway to Oxford. It was the first time as I'd travelled by steam."

"I hadn't been to Oxford for twenty years, and I was quite frustrated by the buildings. We waited at the pay-office till two o'clock [to see the staff officer of pensioners], and as I had my breakfast about six o'clock, I came over faint-like; but the sergeant fetched me a glass of beer. That refreshed me: and I went afore the gentlemen. They asked me lots of questions, and I told 'em all they wanted to know. One of the gentlemen said it was all satisfactory, and the other told me as I didn't seem to have lost my memory, anyhow."

"We went, the sergeant and me, up into the town, and had our dinner, and come home by the train, about four o'clock. I walked up again the three miles from the station; and out-and-out tired I was. But I was all right next day."

"I looks forward to going home, although my generation be mostly dead. I allys was very fond of my native village. Many's the time

I've been there in a dream when I've been in the workhouse—sometimes underground a slate-making—sometimes at church—sometimes at home. I'm used to the church and churchyard, and I looks forward to worshipping in my old church, although I shall always think of the little chapel when the time comes round. Ever since I were quite a little boy I used to sing till I went for a soldier; and I were up in the gallery again as soon as I come back from soldiering, till my voice went away. But I must listen to the others now. My wife and three children lies buried in the churchyard, and all of both our families, hern and mine. At the back of the church is the grave of the young woman I spoke about, who I kept company with before I went away to Waterloo. She died in August, '18, and I come back home in November, '18. It's nigh on fifty year ago; but well I recollects the first thing I did when I come back home and found her gone. I'd thought of her at Waterloo, and I was like a child. I went and lay down by her grave and cried amain, I did. Her father and mother died about ten or twelve years afterwards; and I don't know if there is any of the family left now. I shall soon be laid in the ground with them all. Many's the thought of happiness I feel at having my liberty once more. But I think what cheers me most of all things is the thought that I shall be off the ratepayers' list, and that when I come to die, I shan't be buried by the parish."

And so went home to his village this veteran soldier. A word about how he came to have the happiness of going there.

A well-wisher of the old man was fortunate enough to be allowed to state his case in a letter to the editor of the Times, on the 18th of August last. On the 21st, he received a letter from the Secretary of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, requesting him to furnish to "the Lords and other Commissioners" of the hospital such information as it might be in his power to afford concerning the man whose cause he advocated; "to enable the necessary inquiries to be made."

In this letter it was further stated that a "very liberal provision" is made "by annual vote of parliament for the pension and relief of invalid and disabled soldiers," including, it was implied, those "invalid and disabled soldiers" who are popularly supposed not to be entitled to any pension, by reason of too short a service. That these short-service men are, under certain circumstances, entitled to share in this "very liberal provision" was treated as a fact well known, or as one that ought to be well known: though if there be one thing about army matters less "generally known" than another, it is this same fact.

The "necessary inquiries"—involving, among other things, the old man's journey to Oxford, narrated above—having been made, and having proved satisfactory, the writer of the appeal to the Times, received, on the 12th of October, another letter from Chelsea, stating that "the man named in the margin" had "been granted a pension of ninepence a day," and that "the

necessary measures" would "be adopted for his being paid the same from the 11th of September inclusive, through the staff officer of pensioners for the district in which he resides."

In the mean time, subscriptions had been coming gradually in, in answer to the appeal in the Times of the 18th of August; thus the writer of that appeal was able to announce in the Times of October the 17th that the subscriptions would suffice to double the pension, if necessary, and would yet leave a small margin for investment in the savings-bank against sickness or other emergency.

The old ex-pauper Waterloo-man completed his seventy-fourth year on the eighteenth of October. He had heard of the full extent of his good fortune three days before; and, on the day after his birthday, the writer of these lines went to see him settled in his new lodgings: lodgings far more comfortable than he had hitherto been able to occupy.

"Well, Oliver," said the writer, "I hope you are quite happy and comfortable now?"

"Yes, sir, indeed I be. I have my liberty. I can do as I like. I can take my walk when I like, and go where I like. I can go in and see my brother and sister when I've a mind. I'm a great favourite with the children—I allys was. I have the respect of all the respectable people in and about the place—and them as bain't respectable, I don't care about."

BESET BY BUSHRANGERS.

SURVEYING and exploring a new district in Queensland, is a matter of some hardship and peril. In the evenings, after the day's work is over, when we have finished our "dampers," salt beef, and tea, and are smoking our pipes round a blazing log fire, many a strange story is told. My men are old Bushmen, and are up to a thing or two: especially My Chainman.

He is a harum-scarum, reckless, handsome, genuine Irishman of very respectable family, induced to emigrate many years ago as a hopeless scapegrace. He has knocked about New South Wales and Queensland in all sorts of capacities. I fell in with him by chance. I was fortunate enough to save his life, engaged him, and believe him to be as devoted and fine a fellow as there is in the world.

A few years ago, My Chainman was journeying in the direction of Sydney, from a place in the interior called, I think, Jinballah. Having stopped at several public-houses on the way, he found himself still on his journey with a ten-pound note, half a sovereign, and a half-crown, in his pocket. About a hundred miles from Sydney, he found some confusion in a public-house which he had entered to obtain refreshment. The landlady was crying bitterly, and the servants were in a great fright.

When he entered, the hostess eagerly exclaimed:

"You are not one of thim, are you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Och, it's the Bushrangers I mane. *You* aren't one of *thim*?"

"No. Have they been here, then?"

"Yes, half an hour ago, and cleared my house of all I had. Musha! The widdy's curse be upon thim!"

"Have they gone down the road, or struck right into the bush?"

"Gone down the road to stick up all they meet wid."

"How many?"

"Three; sorrow less."

Now, My Chainman *must* go down to Sydney. He could not take the bush for it, as he did not know the country well enough. He might evade the Bushrangers by some lucky chance, either by the aid of night or other means. He was dressed, of course, in the gear of a thorough Bushman, and they might spare him on the old Scotch principle, "Hawks pyke not oot hawks' een." Besides, he might conceal his ten-pound note, and it would not break his heart to lose his half-sovereign and half-crown. On the whole, then, he saw nothing for it but to resume his journey. He chose his short sock as the best place for the bank-note, and thrust the note into it, without folding it up.

Forth he went, and rode rapidly on for about an hour without seeing the rangers; however, he distinctly saw the fresh tracks of *four* horses in advance. At an abrupt turn of the road, he was covered by three revolvers, and addressed by three voices:

"Dismount!"

No help for it. He got off his horse, and took a survey of the "glorious three." One was a very good-natured-looking fellow; the other seemed rather backward; the third was an unmistakable ruffian.

"Where have you been? You're a digger."

"I'm just coming from the Wanoorah Digger's."

These gold-fields were noted for their poverty.

"How much money have you got?"

"One half-sovereign and one half-crown."

"Is that all?"

"That's all."

It was the good-natured man who spoke in this dialogue.

"I think, Jim, we may let him off. The poor devil must be hard up, coming from those wretched diggings."

"We'll have something to say to him first," replied Number Three, whose accent was Irish; and this gave My Chainman some hope.

"Well, at all events, he must have a glass of grog." My Chainman accordingly drank a bumper that took his breath away.

"Walk before me into the bush," then said Number Three.

"Not a bit of it, Jim; let the poor devil go. Why, he's a countryman of your own. What do *you* say, Jack?"

"Never mind what Jack says!" replied Number Three. "Don't you make an ass of yourself, Dick! I'll have my way in this."

He motioned to My Chainman to go on; and on he went until they reached a belt of scrub.

"Halt! Now, listen to me. It's my opinion that you are a schemer. If I find one shilling on you more than you have acknowledged to" (he swore a terrific oath), "I'll blow your brains out on the spot. Strip!"

My Chainman owned to me that for a moment he felt a mortal terror, but he shook it off, and proceeded to undress.

"Take off your jumper first—not your boots. Now your flannel shirt. Throw them over to me."

He examined them thoroughly.

"Take off your boots. Throw them here. Now your trousers."

He found in the pockets the two coins. And my Chainman hoped that the search was over. Not yet.

"Take off your socks!"

To hesitate was instant death. The ruffian shook both the socks. Let the reader fancy the beating of My Chainman's heart, meanwhile! As he had thrust the note into the sock *without folding it up*, and as the robber had caught the note with the thick sock between his finger and thumb, it was thus prevented from dropping out. To such small things a man may owe dear life itself.

"Now be off."

"What!" said My Chainman. "Would you send a man away stark naked, and in this weather, too?"

"You ought to be thankful for your life."

Just then, up came Dick.

"Haven't you searched him yet? What the devil's the use of keeping him in the cold?"

"You mind your own business, Dick."

"Jim," retorted Dick, "you know I can stand a good deal; but you're not the man to bide a quarrel with me when I'm roused. I won't allow you to do as you did last time. Give this man his boots and trousers; keep his jumper, if you want it."

Thus they split the difference, and My Chainman was left on a bush-road without a horse, and only half clad. He had his ten-pound note, however.

After walking briskly for about twelve miles, he came to a sly grog-shop, where he found two men conversing; one, evidently the host; the other, (he knew as well as if it had been revealed to him,) was the *fourth* Bushranger.

In the endless wilds of Australia, there is not a Bushman whose life does not often depend on "tracking;" and so wonderful do Bushmen become in this respect, that they can tell the date of every mark upon the ground. I have heard them debate as to whether a black's track was an hour old, or two hours. Now, My Chainman had seen the tracks of *four* horses in company, and he had carefully tracked the fourth up to this "humpy," close to which it was standing quietly tied by the bridle.

"If I don't ride that horse away from this, to-day," said My Chainman to himself, "may I never have the blessing of St. Patrick!"

The host was a little man; the Bushranger was a tall and muscular villain, with long black hair falling down his shoulders—a bad sign, as it showed he had been long "out."

They had been talking on a subject that had excited the Bushranger, and that subject, as far as My Chainman could gather from the muttered words he overheard at his entrance, was that the police were on their way up, and not very far off.

My Chainman gave the masonic sign; it was answered by the host.

"Hallo," said the Bushranger, "where do you hail from?"

"I have come down the road."

"Haven't you got a horse?"

There was no use shamming here, so My Chainman at once replied:

"I was stuck up and robbed twelve miles from this, by the Bushrangers."

"The devil! Are they so near? Isn't it fortunate, Casey, that I know this in time?"

"Why?" said Casey. "You're not going that way; you came from that direction yourself a while ago."

The Bushranger at that moment was lighting his pipe with a burning coal, and his back was turned. My Chainman gave a look and made a gesture which were perfectly understood by the shrewd little host.

"I must be going, old man," said the Bushranger, after his pipe had been successfully lighted. "Let's have a glass of grog all round first."

"All right!" said the little man. Three glasses of rum soon stood before the party. My Chainman put his hand forward to take up one of the glasses, but Casey, with an awkward apology about helping the gent first, handed the robber that very glass, gave another to My Chainman, and drank off the third himself.

My Chainman understood all this, and hoped that the stupefying potion would soon take effect. But no. The ruffian's constitution was as sound as the foundations of St. Paul's, and the draught only increased his sharpness and penetration.

"Do you think I don't see through you?" said he, with a diabolical glance at Casey. "I'm not so sure of *you*" (this was to My Chainman); "if I was, I know what I should do."

"What have I done, sir?" said Casey.

"What have you done, you villain? Everything. I'll have your life!"

Now, although My Chainman did not think that the ruffian meant the threat literally, yet he made his little preparations. The fellow was armed to the teeth. He had two revolvers in his belt, and a double-barrelled gun stood close to him. A large sheath-knife hung on his hip. Every second increased the ruffian's fury. His curses and threats were appalling. Casey, the other side of the fire, sat the picture of dismay.

"Why don't you answer me?" the robber at last shouted.

"Because," gasped Casey, "I have nothing to say."

"Nothing to say?" roared the Bushranger. "Take that!"

He drew a revolver, half rose from his seat, and, with wonderful quickness, levelled the weapon at Casey. But My Chainman was quicker than he. He had quietly picked up an American tomahawk which lay on a block beside him, and, just as the Bushranger had given the half turn to fire, down came the tomahawk on the back of the neck. The pistol exploded at the same moment. The wretched man gave hardly a quiver. He was dead in a second. The two survivors looked into each other's faces.

"Of course he was a Bushranger?" inquired Casey, after a long pause.

"Of course he was," said My Chainman; and he then told him the whole story. "But even if he were not, I did it in self-defence, for he would have shot me the next minute."

"You saved my life, however," said Casey, "and that is everything to the purpose."

"I thought at first," said My Chainman, "that you were in league with the robbers."

"Probably I might have been forced to be so in time," was the reply; "but I have not been here long, and, rely upon it, I shan't be here long."

"What is best to be done?" said My Chainman. "Shall I ride on and meet the police, if they are on the way?"

"For the Lord's sake, don't!" exclaimed the other. "His mates are sure to be here in no time, and they'll torture me if they find this out."

"Get up behind me, and we'll both ride off," said My Chainman.

"Then I leave everything belonging to me to be plundered."

"Well, then, man, what is it you want? What's your advice?"

"Let us throw the body down that rock into the scrub there, and then clean up. You ride off. I'll pretend that their mate was after you. If you do meet the police, don't say a word about it."

"But the horse and saddle may be stolen property?"

"You must chance that. It's the only plan."

My Chainman adopted the only plan, rode down to Sydney, and sold the horse.

"But now, sir," said he, "comes the strangest part of the story, and, if I didn't feel sure that you would believe me, I would never tell it. Years passed, and I happened to be travelling through a town where the assizes were going on. I heard that a great murderer was to be tried, so I went to hear the trial. I did hear the trial. As I live and must die, one of the officials of that court, and not the lowest either, was Jim, the Bushranger who stripped me!"

"Of course you communicated your discovery to the police?"

My Chainman gave a dry cough, and, I rather think, got red in the face.

"I never much cottoned to the police, sir, at any time—least of all then. Not so much for my own sake as for others'."

"I see, I see," said I; "but I hope that was the only human blood you ever shed?"

"The only drop," said My Chainman, in some confusion, "saving and excepting one other case. That's a longer yarn than this."

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE LOSS OF THE KENT EAST INDIAMAN BY FIRE (1825).

DR. ARNOLD says, in one of his sermons, referring to this calamity: "Never was the faith and charity of martyrs shown more beautifully than in the Christian soldiers and sailors so nobly united amid the horrors of that scene in the service of God."

The dangers these brave men underwent were deeply sympathised with by the nation, whose courage and chivalrous fidelity they had so well illustrated, and millions of hearts will beat faster with pride and joy at the recital of their providential escape.

It is sometimes difficult to understand why certain events rouse a whole country, while others, apparently equally or more interesting, fail to excite any attention. There had been wrecks at sea, in which thousands more lives had been lost—losses far more heartrending in their suddenness and in the circumstances connected with them. In 1780, fifteen English vessels of war sank together in a tornado off the West Indies. In 1811, two English men-of-war struck on the iron-bound rocks of Jutland, and nearly one thousand of their seamen perished. Yet these catastrophes are now almost forgotten, and the loss of the Kent East Indiaman is remembered, and discussed with an interest that shows that sympathy in the event is still existing. Our nation is incapable of false sentiment or hypocrisy. There is generally a good reason for the emotion it evinces. There is always some peculiar heroism or pathos in any event which touches the national heart.

The Kent, a fine new Indiaman of 1350 tons, Captain Henry Cobb commander, bound to Bengal and China, left the English Downs before a fine fresh north-east wind on February 19, 1825. She had on board twenty officers, three hundred and forty-four soldiers, forty-three women and sixty children belonging to the Thirty-first Regiment, besides twenty private passengers, and a crew (including officers) of one hundred and forty-eight men, making a total of six hundred and forty-one souls.

Early on the 1st of March, eleven days from leaving England, the stately vessel, bewildered by a pitiless storm, lay-to under a triple-reefed main topsail only, having struck her top-gallant yards. The passengers were below, miserable and anxious; the women and children groaning

in their berths, and praying for a calm. The dead-lights were in, and the three hundred and forty-four soldiers, miserable and pale enough, were on deck, attached to the life-lines that were run along the deck for the purpose. The sailors, worn and apprehensive, were hard at work, under the eye of their indefatigable captain. About twelve o'clock the rolling of the ship became worse than ever, being increased by the dead weight of several hundred tons of shot and shell that formed part of the lading. At every lurch the main-chains were thrown deep under water, and the best cleated furniture in the cabin and cuddy (a large dining-room on a level with the quarter-deck) was dashed about with tremendous and dangerous violence.

Just before the morn, one of the ship's officers, wishing to ascertain if all was fast below, descended into the dark hold with two sailors, who carried with them a patent lantern. The candle in the lamp burning dim, the officer very prudently sent it up to the orlop-deck to be trimmed. Having then discovered a rum-cask to be adrift, he called to the sailors for some billets of wood with which to wedge it up. While they were gone, a heavy lurch knocked the lantern out of the officer's hand, and on his letting go the cask to snatch at the lantern, the cask stove, the rum flooded out, the light caught it and broke into a wide blaze—the *ship was on fire!*

For a long time the flames not spreading beyond a place surrounded by the water-casks, it was hoped they could be drenched out; but the light-blue haze soon turned to volumes of thick, brown, curling smoke, that, pouring through the four hatchways, spread through the cabins, and rolled along from the fore-castle to the quarter-deck. There was no longer any hope of suppressing the disaster, or concealing it from the passengers. Soon a strong pitchy smell pervaded the vessel; the fire had burned through to the partitions and sides of the hold. The sailors cried out, all together:

"It has reached the cable tier!"

Major M'Gregor, who had been reading the Bible to a friend, being told that the ship was on fire in the after hold, knocked gently at the cabin-door and quietly informed Colonel Fearon, the commanding officer of the troops. On deck, amid the smoke slowly rising, Captain Cobb and the other officers were already giving orders to the seamen and troops, who were working at the pumps, and passing buckets, and throwing wet sails and hammocks on the now irrepressible fire.

Many of the ladies below, seeing Major M'Gregor's anxious face and absorbed manner, and hearing the increased noise and confusion on deck, could not be pacified by the assurance that the gale was no worse. At this awful crisis, Cobb, firm, staunch, sagacious, preserved an imperturbable courage. Desperate measures were all that were left. He ordered the carpenters and the pioneers, ready with their axes, instantly to scuttle the lower decks, cut the combings of the hatches, and open the lower ports to the

full wash of the waves. The alternative now was between fire or water. If water could only be persuaded to fight fire (as in the old Arabian legends), and would then in pity, after her victory, refrain from sinking that unhappy vessel, the six hundred souls might still be saved.

The order was remorseless in its suddenness. There were a few lives to be sacrificed in order that many might be saved. The axes went to work, the timbers crashed in, over them and through them leaped the water, immediately drowning several sick soldiers, poor women, and shrieking children, whose cries were, however, in a moment stifled.

Colonel Fearon, Captain Bray, and other officers, as they descended to the gun-deck to assist in rapidly opening the ports, met staggering, in an exhausted and almost senseless state, through the dense choking smoke, one of the mates, who had just stumbled over the bodies of several men who had been suffocated. The moment the ports were opened the sea rushed in with cruel and eager force, carrying into the hold in its irresistible progress huge bulkheads and ponderous seamen's chests. The soldiers and sailors, knee-deep in water, tried to cheer each other by the hope that this immense quantity of water, which had already in some degree checked the force of the flames, might soon bring safety, the danger of the explosion of the spirit-casks and powder being now diminished.

The treacherous ally had, however, only brought death in a more sudden and silent form. The ship became water-logged, and presented many indications of settling into a terrible quietude, before going down headlong. A fresh impulse seized the desperate men; they tried to close the ports again, to shut down the hatches, to exclude the external air, and to rather wait for the slower vengeance of the fire. All hope was abandoned. Survivors afterwards thought of the noble lines of the great poet of the day:

Then rose from sea to sky a wild farewell,
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave.

The upper deck was crowded with more than six hundred people, many of them sick, risen half naked from their beds, who were running about scared, and crying for husbands, children, and fathers. They were seeking them only to interchange prayers, and to die in each other's arms. Many were standing in silent resignation, some in stupid insensibility to the fast-coming death; others yielded themselves to tears, or screamed, and tossed their arms in a frenzy of despair. Many were on their knees, shouting prayers and ejaculations from Scripture, appealing with the most earnest gesticulations for mercy to Heaven. The Roman Catholic soldiers were crossing themselves, while a group of veteran soldiers and stout-hearted sailors, who had braved death all their lives, and despised his terrors in whatever shape, threw themselves down directly over the powder-magazine, in order to perish instantly in the explosion, now every moment expected: too brave to rush into

the ravening sea, they wished to avoid calmly the excruciating horrors of death by fire.

Captain Cobb, the brave Kentish man, full of thought, and imperturbable as granite, ordered the deck to be scuttled forward, in order to draw the fire in that direction, as there were several tiers of water-casks between it and the magazine, and the wet sails thrown into the after hold would prevent the fire spreading to the spirit-room abaft. To those who were cool enough to observe, the scenes rapidly passing were truly heartbreaking. In the after cabins on the upper deck some of the soldiers' wives and children were reading and praying with the ladies, who, being only half clothed, had taken refuge there. Many of these latter, and two young sisters in particular, preserved their self-possession, and, with firm reliance on God, comforted the others. One young man asked Major M'Gregor if there was any hope. The major replied, they must prepare themselves to sleep that night in eternity. The lad exclaimed, with fervour, as he pressed the major's hand, "My heart is filled with the peace of God; yet, though I know it is foolish, I dread exceedingly the last struggle."

There was no excitement of battle here to occupy and distract the mind. The unhappy creatures were rather like condemned men waiting the hour of execution. It was very affecting to see the little children in bed in the cuddy-cabins, smiling, and quite unconscious of danger, playing with their toys as usual, or asking innocent and unseasonable questions. One of the senior officers whispered to some of the older children, that now was the time to put in practice what they had been taught at the regimental school. They replied, with the hot tears running down their cheeks:

"Yes, sir, we are trying to remember them, and we are praying to God."

All exertions had failed; it was only left them to wait calmly for their terrible and agonising death. Few of the sailors or soldiers seemed to have either much hope or dread of a future state; so religious men present observed. Many, however, vowed, with loud and piteous cries that if their lives were spared they would dedicate themselves to good works; and others, filled with remorse, cried that the judgment was falling justly on them for the crimes and sins of their past lives.

While the crew of the Kent lay in this heart-rending position of physical quietude and mental terror, the waves rose higher and beat faster and more furious, as if impatient at the long struggle with their hopeless victims, and greedy to snatch from the fire their already half-drowned prey. All at once the binnacle, by a violent lurch, was torn from its fastenings, and the compass, with its now useless needle, was dashed to pieces on the deck. It seemed an omen of approaching death, and one of the younger mates exclaimed, with despair:

"What! is the Kent's compass really gone?"

A young officer was seen to quietly and

thoughtfully remove a lock of hair from his writing-case and place it calmly near his heart; while Major M'Gregor, writing a few lines to his father, enclosed it carefully in a bottle, in the hope that it might relieve those he loved from long years of fruitless anxiety and suspense. This bottle was, however, dropped in the cabin in the emotion of the next moment, and was forgotten. By a most singular coincidence, however, it floated from the wreck, and was afterwards picked up at Barbadoes.

All hope had now gone; but it occurred to Mr. Thomson, the fourth mate, during the lull, to send a man to the fore-top, rather in the ardent wish than in the expectation that a friendly sail might possibly be in sight. Eagerly the man clambered—eagerly all eyes were fixed on him in momentary hope; the despairing scarcely looked up to know on whom the eyes were fixed. The man swept the horizon with the long-searching practised glance of a sailor; but made no sign. Suddenly he threw his head forward and strained his eyes on one spot, without moving. It was a moment of unutterable suspense. All at once he said something.

Gracious God! Merciful God! He waves his hat. Silence!

Then down to the paralysed crowd below, fixed like statues with expectation, comes the clear sharp shout:

"A SAIL ON THE LEE BOW!"

Hope's rainbow springs up and brightens the air. Many burst into tears, and fall down in grateful prayer. Three ringing cheers break from the men; a faint smile of joy comes over the stern face of the captain, as, to hide his emotion, he gives quick and sharp orders to hoist flags of distress, to fire minute-guns, and to bear down under the three topsails and foresail still left upon the heaven-sent vessel. Women clasp their children; friends grasp hands; husbands and wives fly into each other's arms with tears of joy. The sailors hurry to their guns, and load and fire every sixty seconds.

The vessel proved to be the Cambria, a small brig of two hundred tons burthen, W. Cook captain, bound to Vera Cruz, and having on board twenty or thirty Cornish miners, and several agents of the Anglo-Mexican Company. But the danger was still imminent; the brig either did not observe the signal, or was not disposed or able to lend assistance. The wind was so tremendous that the Kent's guns could not be heard; but, at last, the Cambria slowly tacked—then hesitated. Then up went the British colours, the brig crowds all sail, and bears down to the relief of the burning vessel.

But the danger was still threatening and perilous. The Kent had been already a long time burning; the brig was extremely small, and there was a tremendous sea running for any boats that came to the rescue. It was certain that many must perish, and those who determined to be last felt even yet no hope left them of preservation.

"In what order are the officers to move off?" said Captain Cobb to Major M'Gregor.

"Of course in funeral order, the juniors first," was the brave reply.

"And see," said Colonel Fearon, "that any man is instantly cut down who presumes to enter the boats before the women and children."

The soldiers and sailors were already looking with wild and hungry eyes at the boats; a maddened rush seemed certain. The officers at once drew their swords, and stood by the starboard cuddy-port where the cutter hung.

The ladies and soldiers' wives were to go in the first boat. At about half-past two (four hours and a half from the breaking out of the fire), the women, hastily wrapped up, moved in a mournful procession from the after cabins to the cuddy-port. Amid the unutterable anguish of that sudden and, as it seemed, eternal parting, not a word or scream was uttered; even the infants ceased to cry, as if in emulation of their parents' courage. Only in one or two cases ladies plaintively entreated permission to die with their husbands; but on being told that every moment's delay cost a human life, they one by one tore themselves from their husbands' embraces, and were placed, without a murmur, in the boat, which was instantly lowered into a most dangerous and tempestuous sea. Twice, indeed, there came a cry from the chains that the boat was swamping. Captain Cobb, dreading this lowering—always a difficult work—had wisely placed a man with an axe to cut the tackle, if there was the slightest difficulty in unhooking it.

The order was given to "unhook," but the bow-ropes fouled, and the axe would not clear them. The moment was critical. The boat followed the motion of the ship, and in another instant would have been hanging perpendicularly by the bow, when just then a wave lifted up the stern, and enabled the quick seaman to disengage the tackle. The boat, dexterously cleared, launched out upon the waves, now a speck on the crest, now disappearing in the dark valleys between the billows.

The Cambria lay prudently at some distance from the Kent, dreading an explosion or the fire of her shotted guns, and the men had far to row. To better balance the boat, and to give the men freer play for their oars, the women and children were stowed close together under the seats, so exposed to the spray that they were soon breast-high in water, and the children all but drowned. It was a half-hour of dreadful anxiety for those on board the Kent.

There was still great difficulty and danger in getting the passengers on board the Cambria. "The children first," was the cry, and they were at once thrown up or handed from the boat. The women were then urged to avail themselves of every friendly lift of a wave to spring into the friendly arms held out for them. Only one lady came short in leaping, and would have certainly perished had she not caught a rope hanging over the Cambria's side, and saved herself till she could be dragged aboard. So great was the joy and gratitude among the husbands on board the Kent on seeing the safety of their wives and

children, that they for a time seemed to forget the storm over their heads and the fiery volcano beneath their feet.

As the Cambria's boats could no longer get alongside in such a heavy sea, it was determined to tie a child to every woman, and to lower them by ropes from the stern. The heaving of the vessel, and the extreme difficulty of lowering at the moment the boat was underneath, rendered it impossible to prevent plunging the poor creatures repeatedly into the water. No woman was lost, but the younger children nearly all perished from cold and exhaustion. The women wept silently over their dead children, half paralysed with the agony of their fear, and the anguish of the recent parting. Now the deaths grew more frequent, as the excitement and hurry increased, and the sun began to set, as if cruelly withdrawing his light from their great misery.

Amid this conflict of feelings and passions, roused to the utmost, many affecting episodes of parental and filial affection and of generous and unselfish friendship occurred. At that moment even the sourest cynic would have owned that human hearts are not all bad. Death began to claim his victims with terrible rapidity. Two or three soldiers, to relieve their wives of the care of several of their children, sprang into the water with them, and instantly perished. One young lady, who had hitherto absolutely refused to quit her father at his post, was not saved by the boats till she had sunk five or six times. Another soldier, having the horrible alternative of losing his wife or his four children, saved his wife, and was compelled to leave his four children to the fire. A fine young soldier, having no wife nor children of his own, insisted on having three children lashed to him, and flung himself into the water to try and reach the boat. He, however, failed, and was again drawn into the ship, but not till two of the children were already dead. One man fell down the hatchway headlong into the flames; another broke his back and fell overboard; a third slipped between the boat and the Cambria, and had his head crushed to pieces; and several other unfortunate men were lost in trying to clamber too hastily into the brig.

Captain Cobb and Colonel Fearon now seeing that it was risking the lives of all to delay with the women alone, who, being weak and terrified, took longer to escape, gave orders that a certain regulated number of soldiers should accompany each boat. Many soldiers, instantly leaping overboard in their eagerness to escape, were drowned in the general confusion. One poor fellow was just raising his hand to lay hold of the boat's gunwale, when the bow of the boat gave a sudden pitch, struck him on the head, and he sunk. This man's wife, to whom he was warmly attached, had hidden herself in the vessel at Deal, in order to accompany her husband.

One of the sailors, who had placed himself over the magazine, and there waited patiently for the long-expected explosion, now leaped up

in a rage, crying: "Well, if she won't blow up, I'll see if I can't get away from her!" He reached the boat in safety and escaped.

Three out of the six boats of the Kent were stove in, or swamped, during the day; one was full of men, who, it was supposed, had plundered the cuddy-cabins, and sank sooner from the weight of their ill-gotten spoil, which they now probably considered had become common property.

The danger was now increasing at a terrible rate. Darkness was coming on, and the flames were slowly but perceptibly extending. Colonel Fearon and Captain Cobb, therefore, felt fresh measures must be at once taken. A rope was slung from the end of the spanker-boom, and along this slippery spar, nineteen feet from the stern, the soldiers had to crawl and slide down into the boats that were tossing wildly some thirty feet below. If the man dropping failed to seize the right moment for falling, he swung in the air, fell into the sea, or was crushed by the returning boat. Dreading the dangers, many of the soldiers, now less restrained, threw themselves out of the stern windows, and were frequently drowned before reaching the boats. Rafts made of spars and hencoops were constructed and thrown overboard to help these fugitives, and to become a last point of retreat if the flames spread faster. The men were also advised to tie ropes round their waists, in order to lash themselves to the rafts. Even at this crisis the soldiers were scrupulous in asking leave before they cut the cordage from the officers' coats, and some of them, having discovered a box of oranges, would not shake their thirst till their officers had taken their share.

The officers began to leave the ship in prescribed order, with rigid discipline, and intrepid coolness—neither hurrying impatiently, nor ostentatiously refusing to go. A thoughtful man, who afterwards recorded his observations, mentions that, amongst the sufferers, there seemed no degrees of courage between high fortitude and frenzied cowardice. There appeared to be but two classes—those whose minds were raised to heroic endurance, and those who seemed paralysed, or driven into delirium by the sudden pressure and agony of an unusual danger. In the course of the day, many, however, who had been agitated and timid in the morning, rose by a great internal effort into positive distinction for courage, while others, at first cool and brave, appeared suddenly to experience a physical reaction and a collapse, and cast their minds prostrate before the danger.

Just at this time all eyes were fixed on the red setting sun. Should they ever again see it rise? was the thought preying at every heart. The cuddy, so lately the scene of kindly intercourse and gaiety, was now full of smoke, and deserted by all but a few men, who lay drunk on the floor, stupidly heedless of danger, or who prowled about like beasts of prey in search of plunder. Sofas, cabinets, and desks, lay shattered in a

thousand pieces. Geese and fowls that had got loose were cackling with hunger; while a solitary pig, broken from its sty in the fore-castle, was vainly routing at the Brussels carpet in one of the cabins.

As night advanced, the alarm and impatience increased tenfold. The timid and cowardly filled the air with their groundless or exaggerated reports of the fire. The soldiers began to tie towels and white linen round their heads, in order to be sooner recognised in the water; the sailors, more nimble, cool, and ready, had nearly all effected their escape. In the dreadful intervals between the boats (three-quarters of an hour), men, after a period of brooding, would burst forth into long lamentations, that only gradually subsided. They seemed like persons awoke from a nightmare. The oldest and coolest soldiers evinced no hurry to leave, no desire to remain behind longer than necessary.

The women had gone, the braver men had left; the residue were the cowards, and the baser and more excitable sort, whom nothing could arouse to becoming fortitude, and who refused to adopt the proper and prescribed means of safety. In vain Captain Cobb threatened and entreated; they still obstinately hesitated, begging and imploring to be lowered like the women had been. But this was impossible, for it was a slow process, and every moment was now valuable.

Between nine and ten o'clock the boatmen shouted that the wreck, long since nine or ten feet below the water-mark, had sunk two feet lower since their last trip. Colonel Fearon and Major M'Gregor, who had promised to remain to the last with Captain Cobb, prepared to leave, there being still three boats to fill. Out at once, one after the other, without pausing, they crept along the long tossing boom in the darkness, and in the blinding squall of wind and rain. The other landsmen still dared not follow, and remained to die horribly. When they got towards the end, the wind was so violent that the three men despaired of reaching the rope. The first was twice plunged over his head in the water; the second, Major M'Gregor, noticing that it was dangerous to drop down the rope as the boat was inclining towards the person descending, waited till the boat receded, and so dropped safely into it as it swayed back, without being either drenched or bruised. Colonel Fearon, the third, was drawn under the boat, struck against it, and was at last dragged in only by the hair of his head, almost senseless and alarmingly bruised.

Captain Cobb still remained on board, generously urging the few dumb and powerless wretches that remained to pass on along the boom, on which they crowded. But finding all entreaties useless on such men—many of whom, however, had previously shown courage—and hearing the guns—their tackles bursting in the flame—fall and explode in the hold, instantly saw the moment had come when he could do no more. He therefore sprang on the boom, seized hold of the

topping lift or rope that connects the driver-boom with the mizen-top, and passing over the heads of the infatuated men, dropped himself into the water, and escaped.

Yet even then a boat from the *Cambria* remained under the *Kent's* stern, her crew expostulating and entreating those on board, till the flames, bursting from the cabin windows, almost scorched the oars; nor would the captain of the *Cambria* let the boat come alongside his ship till he was sure that no hope was left.

Some of the *Kent's* crew were less generous in their self-devotion, and refused again to venture their lives. Still the boats did not cease to ply between the *Cambria* and the wreck, until one of the three boats left had to be plugged with soldiers' jackets, another had had its bow stove, and the second was so torn as to make it necessary to lash the oars to the cutter's ribs.

The scenes on board the *Cambria* were beyond the painter's and the poet's powers. The most passionate joy alternated with the most wild despair as the death of husbands or of children was announced, or as some saved man rushed into his wife's arms. But all these conflicting feelings were arrested by the last tremendous tableau of destruction and death. From that doom some had just escaped; in that doom the husbands or children of others were passing from them in torture.

The last boat had hardly arrived, when the *Kent*, three miles distant, showed flames spreading fast along the upper deck and poop, and flashing like lightning up the masts and rigging, till all became a pyramid of flame, that crimsoned the sky and shone red upon the *Cambria's* sails. The flags of distress, hoisted so hopefully in the morning, were seen waving amid the fire, till one by one the masts fell like stately steeples over the ship's side. About half-past one the flames reached the magazine; there was a violent explosion, the blazing timbers of the *Kent* flew like rockets into the air; and then came a horrible darkness that seemed deeper and blacker than before.

In the mean time, the frightened and despairing men left on board the *Kent* were driven by the advancing flames to the chains, till the masts fell crashing overboard, and they then clung to them in the water in horrible suspense for some hours.

Help was approaching. About twelve o'clock the watch of the barque *Caroline*, on her passage from Alexandria to Liverpool, observed a bright light on the horizon, and knew it at once to be a ship on fire. There was a heavy sea on, but the captain, instantly setting his maintop-gallant-sail, ran down towards the spot. About one, the sky becoming brighter, a sudden jet of vivid light shot up; but they were too distant to hear the explosion. In half an hour the *Caroline* could see the wreck of a large vessel lying head to the wind. The ribs and frame timbers, marking the outlines of double ports and quarter-galleries, showed that the burning skeleton was that of a first-class Indianman. Every other external feature

was gone; she was burnt nearly to the water's edge, but still floated, pitching majestically as she rose and fell on the long rolling swell of the bay. The vessel looked like an immense cage of charred basket-work filled with flame, that here and there blazed brighter at intervals. Above, and far to leeward, there was a vast drifting cloud of curling smoke spangled with millions of sparks and burning flakes, and scattered by the wind over the sky and waves.

As the *Caroline* approached, part of a mast and some spars, rising and falling, were observed grinding under the weather-quarter of the wreck, having become entangled with the keel or rudder-irons, and thus attaching it to the hull of the vessel. The *Caroline*, coming down swift before the wind, was in a few minutes brought across the bows of the *Kent*. At that moment a shout was heard as if from the very centre of the fire, and the same instant several figures were observed clinging to a mast. The sea was heavy, and the wreck threatened every moment to disappear. The *Caroline* was hove-to to leeward, in order to avoid the showers of flakes and sparks, and to intercept any boats or rafts. The mate and four seamen pushed off in the jolly-boat, through a sea covered with floating spars, chests, and furniture, that threatened to crush or overwhelm the boat. When within a few yards of the stern, they caught sight of the first living thing—a wretched man clinging to a spar close under the ship's counter. Every time the stern-frame rose with the swell he was suspended above the water, and scorched by the long keen tongues of pure flame that now came darting through the gun-room ports. Every time this torture came the man shrieked with agony, the next moment the surge came and buried him under the wave, and he was silent. The *Caroline's* men, defying the fire, pulled close to him, but just as their hands were stretching towards him (latterly the poor wretch had been silent), the rope or spar was snapped by the fire, and he sank for ever.

The men then, carefully backing, carried off six other of the nearest men from the mast. The small boat, only eighteen feet long, would not hold more than eleven persons, and indeed, as it was, was nearly swamped by a heavy wave. In half an hour the boat bravely returned, and took off six more.

The mate, fearing the vessel was going down, and that the masts would be swallowed in the vortex, redoubled his efforts to get a third time to the wreck. While struggling with a head sea, and before the boat could reach the mast, the end came. The fiery mass settled like a great red-hot coal into the waves, and disappeared for ever. The sky grew instantly dark, a dense shroud of black smoke lingered over the grave of the ship, and instead of the crackle of burning timbers and the flutter of flames, there spread the ineffable stillness of death.

As the last gleam flickered out, Mr. Wallen, the mate of the *Caroline*, with great quickness of thought set the spot by a star. Then, in

spite of the danger in the darkness of floating wreck, he resolved to wait quietly till daylight, and ordered his men to shout repeatedly to cheer any who might be still floating on stray spars. For a long time no one answered; at last, a feeble cry came, and the Caroline's sailors returned it loudly and gladly. What joy that faint cry must have brought to those friendly cars! With what joy must the boatmen's shout have been received!

When day broke, the mast was visible, and four motionless men could be seen among its cordage and top-work. They seemed dead, but as the boat neared, two of them feebly raised their heads and stretched out their arms. When taken into the boat, they were found to be faint and almost dead from the cold and wet, and the many hours they had been half under water. The other two were stone-dead. One had bound himself firmly to the spar, and lay as if asleep, with his arms round it, and his head upon it, as if it had been a pillow. The other stood half upright between the cheeks of the mast, his face fixed in the direction of the boat, his arms still extended. They were both left on the spar. One of the Indiaman's empty boats was also found drifting a short distance off. The wind beginning to freshen and a gale coming on, it was all the jolly-boat could do to rejoin the Caroline. There could be no doubt that when the Caroline hove-to and luffed under the lee of the Kent, it must have passed men drifting to leeward on detached spars. They of course all perished in the rising storm.

In the mean time, the brig *Cambria*, unconscious of these scenes of hope and despair, was making sail, and running at the rate of ten knots an hour back to Old England. The shrewd Yorkshire smelters and brave Cornish miners having dragged the last of the exhausted survivors on board, had shared with them their clothes and provisions, and surrendered their beds to the naked and half-famished women and children.

The people of the Kent were still in a condition of great misery and danger. Even now their ultimate safety was by no means sure. A gale of wind was blowing, and six hundred human beings, several hundred miles from any accessible port, were crowded into a small brig of two hundred tons. In a little cabin, built to hold ten persons, there were now huddled nearly eighty, who had scarcely room even to sit. The brig's bulwarks were driven in, and the seas beat so dangerously that the hatches could only be lifted off between the return of the waves. No lights would burn below in that polluted atmosphere, and the steam arising from the breathing excited at one time an apprehension the ship was on fire. The men on deck were standing half naked, and ankle-deep in water. Infants were crying for the milk their mothers could not give them, and many of the children and elder women were seized with fits. In the midst of this misery, a soldier's wife was delivered of a child, which was christened the *Cambria*, and survived. If the

wind abated or changed, and the *Cambria* had been long kept in the open sea, famine and fever must have soon claimed their victims.

The gale continued with greater violence, and Captain Cook, crowding all sail even at the risk of carrying away his masts, nobly urged his vessel forward, and on the afternoon of the 3rd the cheering cry from aloft of "Land! land!" brought joy to every heart. That evening the Scilly light gleamed out brightly, and running rapidly along the purple granite coast, the *Cambria* joyfully cast anchor in Falmouth about half-past twelve on the following morning.

On reviewing this terrible calamity, it will be seen at once that the same gale which caused the first accident also contributed to the safety of the Kent's crew and passengers, as, but for the heavy rolling that enabled Captain Cobb to at once inundate the hold, the vessel would have burnt away before the *Cambria*'s boats could have reached it. There were also many other singular and providential circumstances attending the event. The *Cambria*, which had been unexpectedly detained in port nearly a month, had that morning completely changed her course, and taken an opposite tack, to give the distressed and labouring brig some ease. The Kent had sighted no vessel before, nor did the *Cambria* see another till she entered the chops of the Channel. It was also remarkable that the fire, though undisturbed, should have been eleven hours reaching the magazine, the spirit-room, and the tiller-ropes. Had the *Cambria*, too, been homeward-bound, she would not have had food enough on board for one meal, and if she had had a full cargo, there would not have been time in that heavy weather to stow even three hundred of the six hundred survivors, and many must have perished.

The people of Falmouth overwhelmed the sufferers with kindness. The Governor-General of Pendennis Castle took instant steps for the disembarkation. The ladies formed, as before, the vanguard; then came the haggard, cold, wet, and half-clothed soldiers and sailors; lastly, the officers, beggared by the loss of their stores, and on them the compassionate and warm-hearted Cornish people pressed hats, shoes, and coats, as soon as they reached the shore. Every private house was thrown open, subscriptions were collected, clothes provided for the women and children, and mourning found for the poor widows and orphans. The sick and wounded were sent to the hospital, and the crew sent home with money provided by Captain Cobb. In all these good works the Quakers of Falmouth were especially active.

On the Sunday after their arrival, all the officers, passengers, ladies, soldiers' wives, soldiers, and sailors went to church to publicly thank God for their deliverance, and a touching sight it was. On the 13th the regiment embarked for Chatham, where the commander-in-chief allowed them a period of relaxation and rest before they re-embarked for India and China.

A piece of plate was presented to Captain Cook, of the Cambria, by the officers and passengers of the Kent, and the Duke of York publicly thanked him for his humane zeal and promptitude. The secretary of war (Lord Palmerston) authorised a sum of five hundred pounds to be given to the captain and crew of the Cambria, and the agents of the ship were also paid two hundred and eighty-seven pounds for provisions, two hundred and eighty-seven pounds for passengers' diet, and five hundred pounds for demurrage. The East India Company awarded six hundred pounds to Captain Cook, one hundred pounds to the first mate, fifty pounds to the second mate, ten pounds each to the nine men of the crew, fifteen pounds each to the twenty-six miners, and one hundred pounds to the ten chief miners for extra stores, to make their voyage out more comfortable. The Royal Exchange Assurance gave Captain Cook fifty pounds, and his officers and crew fifty pounds. The subscribers to Lloyd's voted him a present of one hundred pounds; the Royal Humane Society awarded him an honorary medallion; and the underwriters at Liverpool were also prominent in their liberality.

So ended the last scene of a calamitous event, attended with the loss of eighty-one persons.*

A DANGEROUS HAND.

HAVE you ever been in Switzerland? No? Then go to Thun, one of the drollest little towns in the world, and one of the pleasantest. It stands in a noble park—the valley of the Aar—and at the extremity of an ornamental piece of water designed by the very First of Landscape Gardeners. The houses and the streets have entered into a conspiracy with the mountains, with the lake, the clouds, and the river, to fascinate and detain the onward traveller, that he may leave a little of his cash in the place. Every nook and lane is a gem begging the photographer to come and copy it; every opening is a scene, every wide space a panorama.

The town of Thun itself, small yet varied, quaint yet pretty, is one of the most original habitations of men. The balconies, the arched projecting roofs, and the pointed turrets, run each other hard in their rivalry for the prize of attractive coquetry.

It was at this same Thun that I first caught sight of her. Now, happily, I have the right to say *her*. You have seen, at some theatre, a lovely fairy, in a pork-pie hat, step out suddenly from behind the wings, charming all the male beholders ranging between the ages of fourteen and four-score. That morning, the drying-ground, a little below the market-place, was full of sheets—twenty times more than would be required to serve as screens for a Private Theatricals. Behind them, I heard a silver voice which said,

"This way, papa! I am sure this is the way to the Freienhof."

And then there came forth from behind the white curtain a vision which made me forget everything else. I had of course seen pretty girls before, but I had never yet seen *my* pretty girl. It was not the fair, clear complexion, nor the flaxen hair, nor the coral lips, which shot the dart; but it was the bright, spontaneous way in which those hazel eyes met mine; the extraordinary quickness with which we exchanged a glance; the slight blush and the gentle smile which followed as her eyes dropped immediately afterwards; and the involuntary halt, as if one had something important to say and the other expected something important to be said. As for papa, I don't think I saw him at all *that* time. You have heard of love at first sight? That is just what it was.

They went their way, through the tiny market, into the street; and I think I remember that she walked very slowly, as if she would have been glad to sit down and rest. I was nailed to the spot, looking after her until she was out of sight. Of one thing only was I thoroughly conscious. I had seen my wife, if ever I was to have a wife. That face, that figure, and that voice, had a rent in the clouds of futurity through whose long perspective a secret presentiment showed me my future. Talk of your magic mirrors, your enchanted crystals! Talk of distant events revealed in drops of ink! There is no magic like a sympathetic glance.

The way to the Freienhof! It was the very hotel I was staying at. But the direction they took was *not* the way to the Freienhof. Were they going for a stroll of discovery, or had they merely mistaken their way? Time would show. Saith the proverb, "Everything comes to him who can wait." I could wait; and did wait where I was.

While wondering at, though perfectly understanding, the novel ferment which then was working within me, my field of view was crossed by a solitary individual who was proceeding onward with uncertain steps. His make-up was fashionable, though perhaps a little seedy; but that tells for nothing on a continental trip. His black hair might be a little too ringletty; his whiskers a little too Dundrearyish. His hat had contours and lines of beauty in its rim more suited to Rotten Row than to searches after the picturesque. He made you doubt whether he were a *very* gentlemanly man indeed, or not a gentleman at all. You must have seen him on some race-course, or somebody excessively like him. The face looked a little tired and worn; but it bravely carried the east-iron smile which is peculiar to opera-dancers and people of the world obliged to play the part of universal amiables.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, perceiving me. "I *really* beg ten thousand pardons; but *would* you do me the very great favour to tell me the way to the Freienhof?" He italicised

* One woman, twenty-five children, one seaman, and fifty-four soldiers.

those words with a melodious drawl. "My friend, Sir Charles, who brought me to Thun in his carriage, tried to persuade me to remain at the Bellevue. Charming house, excellent table, magnificent view, good society! Quite, in short, *my* style of thing, sir. But, although the Freienhof is only second-rate, I had promised to go there—*promised*, sir. And when a lady is in the case—"

"Hang the fellow and his confidential talk!" I grumbled to myself. "What a nuisance, to be so interrupted! At such an interesting moment, too!" So raising my hat, I coldly answered, "You have only to go straight forward; take the first turn to the left, and you will reach the Freienhof."

"*Much* obliged; *very* much indeed," he rejoined, with treacley suavity. "Such kindness to an utter stranger! Pray do me the honour to accept my card. You are doubtless at the Bellevue? You are not going to the Freienhof?"

"No, I am not, sir," I fear I growled; internally adding, "until I think proper."

"I thank you very much. This way, I think?" And, with a honeyed bow, he took his leave.

"Mr. Percy Howard!" I muttered, looking at the card, which I had not been able to avoid receiving. "Every Howard kins with Norfolk's duke. For me, you are too mealy-mouthed. But what has become of the other parties?" I had not very long to wait. As I expected, the father and daughter had taken the wrong turn, and were now retracing their steps. She did not seem in the least surprised to find me lingering there; nor did he, for he had never given me a thought. Now, or never, was the time to make an attempt at *something*.

"Pray excuse me, sir," I said, a little flurried, "but I think I overheard you mentioning the Freienhof Hotel. I am staying there, and this is the way to it. You can reach it almost immediately. But it is still two hours to the table d'hôte dinner; and if—if you are not too tired, there is a wonderful prospect close at hand, which will well repay you for the trouble of mounting to it!"

"Indeed! What do you say, Maria? Do you think you can manage a little climbing?"

"I should like it above all things. Ever since I caught sight of it, I have been wishing to get a better view of that brilliant white mountain—the Blümlisalp, I think."

"Very well, my dear. Let us go to the inn, and ask them for a guide to the spot which the gentleman is so obliging as to—"

"Quite needless, sir," I interposed. "I was proceeding there when I saw you pass [a freak of fancy ordinarily known as a fib]; and, if you allow me, I will lead the way."

"Is it far?" the papa replied. "Is it steep?"

"Neither one nor the other. To reach the point of view, we have only to mount this long covered staircase by a series of low steps which are suited almost for children's feet. Is the young lady beginning to feel tired?"

"Not in the least. But if I were, here is a landing-place which will give us a minute's breathing. How curious! It is the centre of five different staircases, some running up, and some taking you down."

"This one is ours. Let us follow it. We have reached the cemetery, and have no further to climb. We have only a few steps to take on level ground; and now, if you please, look forward."

"How beautiful!" she exclaimed, after a few moments' pause; "I had no idea, until now, that the earth was capable of so much beauty. Never, never shall I forget this day." After gazing again at the view, she bestowed on me a look of thankfulness which was worth all the compliments in the world. This noble sight, enjoyed in common, had set its seal on our companionship. We had already grown almost intimate. It was understood between us two that we were friends, if not something more.

"It certainly is fine," assented the senior. "Mr. Howard would describe it in his most flowery style."

"Yes," said Maria, "he would indeed; for he is not afraid to talk about what he does not understand. He confounds Romans with Greeks; and, on being made aware of his mistake, slips out of it by calling them both the ancients."

"You are prejudiced, my dear, against him. You must try and get over your dislike. I wonder, by the way, if he has arrived."

In Swiss travel there is a peculiarity which is pleasant or not, according to circumstances. If you are there on any social speculation, to marry off your daughters, to make acquaintances you would not be likely to pick up at home, to light upon friends by unexpected chances, you can't have a better place of meeting, nor a surer rendezvous; but if your real aim be the beauties of nature, to be enjoyed in poetic retirement and quiet, you are liable to interruption.

The fact is, that, as everybody except the climbers of unclimbed peaks is pursuing a beaten track from which there is little deviation, if you meet an individual once, you are almost sure to fall in with him again. On steamer, in diligence, at glacier foot, by waterfall, you find faces which have accompanied you throughout your itinerary. If *you* do the Wengern Alp, they go too; if you go to see the Giessbach illuminated, you behold there physiognomies which you have already beheld reflecting daylight at Lucerne, Berne, or Interlaken. If you like the faces, well and good; if you don't, their tracking your heels so closely becomes wearisome. The only means of escape from such comrades is to stop somewhere for a week, and let the stream pass. The summer current will bring in a supply fresh from the inexhaustible springs of British life.

In this way, even before they entered Switzerland, my charmer's father had picked up Mr. Howard; while Mr. Howard had not the least intention to loose his hold of his new acquaintance.

Hence their expectation of meeting each other again at Thun.

The slightest possible shade of annoyance at her parent's partiality for his new-found friend, overspread *her* face for an instant, and then she glanced again at the landscape. Turning to me, she asked, "What is that mountain which stands before us—that dark green pyramid, clothed at its base with thick festoons of pine-tree forest?"

"That's *my* mountain—my beloved Niesen. Everybody loves the Niesen. 'All round the Niesen' is a toast as popular here as 'All round the Wrekin' is in Shropshire. Niesen is a favourite name to confer on dogs and railway locomotives. Long live the noble Niesen! I stood on his top the other day."

"Indeed! Is it possible?" Maria exclaimed, regarding me, in her innocence, as an Alpine hero.

"It is not only possible, but so easy, that *you* can make the ascent if you choose."

"Really! I should enjoy above all things to be able to say I had ascended a mountain."

After some discussion, the gentleman agreed that the ascent should be made. "By the way," he continued, "my name is William Greenwood, of the firm of Greenwood, Darkins, and Blake, Manchester."

"And mine, sir, is Henry Carter, son of the late John Edmund Carter, formerly of Manchester, latterly of Liverpool."

"Really! I remember your father failed in my debt, giving a dividend of eight and sixpence in the pound."

"Yes, sir, he did; and five years afterwards paid you in full, with interest."

"True; like an honourable man as he was. To think of meeting poor Carter's son in this way, by chance! He left you, I believe, not so very badly off?"

"I am rich, by living within my income."

"And you are strolling about here, I suppose, like the rest of us, without any definite purpose?"

"I am trying to put a little method into my trip by comparing, for my own private satisfaction, the respective merits of several well-known eminences which are reached on foot with no great exertion. I scramble from one hill-top to another, and note which pleases me best."

"The volume under your arm is doubtless your guide-book. There are so many, that it is difficult to choose between them."

"It is nothing so common-place as that, but a resource for a rainy day or a leisure hour. It is the *Mysteries of the Hand*, by Desbarrolles, in which the science of Chiromancy is fully and seriously expounded."

"A revival of an old delusion. But if people *will* pry into futurity, one form of the folly is as good as another. You will tell as about it by-and-by; it is time now that we think of dinner."

At dinner, I had the great satisfaction of securing the seat next to *her*. Opposite to us

was Mr. Percy Howard, looking anything but pleased at the favour I enjoyed. Maria (that I now knew to be her delightful name) did not like him more than I did, and received his advances with undisguised coldness. I fancied I observed that the waiter behind us was strange in his manner towards him, as if Mr. Howard paid too particular attention to the polish of the forks and spoons within his reach. To the discussion of our Niesen project Mr. Howard listened with open ears. It was agreed that I should go forward to Wimmis, the village at the base of the mountain, to secure horses up it, and bedrooms in the little hotel at its top, and that they would drive there early the following morning to commence the ascent immediately.

Next day, I bade a brief good-bye to the father and daughter, and reached Wimmis, where every arrangement was speedily made. During the inn-gossip of the afternoon, singular inquiries were put to me respecting the strangers then at Thun. I answered them as well as I could, but what in truth was uppermost in my mind was the expected arrival of my fair one to-morrow.

The morrow came, and with it my new friends; but they were not alone. Mr. Howard had fastened himself upon them, and with him a gentlemanly young fellow enough—rather too finespun—an acquaintance of his, whom I had noticed at the table d'hôte. As soon as they alighted, we set off, myself alone on foot, the rest of the party on horseback.

The ascent of the Niesen was glorious. Maria (by whose side I walked, telling her guide to proceed in advance) was in ecstasies at the harmony of sights and sounds, at the tinkling of bells from cows and goats, with the stream of the Simme rushing below. Every turn of the zig-zag path presented us with a fresh point of view. As we mounted higher, all was repose; soft colours—melting hues of green and brown—met our delighted eyes. The air was pure and balmy; our minds, elevated by the scenery, entirely forgot the lower world, the roar of city carriages, and the busy hum of men.

We met sledges laden with mountain cheese, gliding down gently over the grass; we passed men carrying on their shoulders loads of wine and other provisions for consumption at the summit. We scaled, one after the other, the three separate masses which together constitute the Niesen. Near the top, I crept down a rock, and was suddenly lost to my companion's view. Maria uttered a pretty little scream, highly flattering to my self-importance. Soon returning, I had the pleasure of presenting her with a handful of snow.

At last we reached the highest pinnacle. I make no attempt to describe the panorama it commands. It made us regardless of everything else, I believe, except each other's presence. We drank in with our eyes the snowy peaks, the outspread lakes, the meandering streams. And

then—and then—the Alpine air reminded everybody that meal-time was approaching. The little hotel, crouching in a hollow not far from the top, opened its hospitable doors. We dined. While dining, a cloud enveloped the mountain. So the evening had to be beguiled with talk, in the course of which Mr. Greenwood referred to my studies in palmistry.

It was only natural that so obsolete an art should be disdainfully regarded by Mr. Howard and his friend.

"Will you look at my hand, by way of experiment?" asked the fine young gentleman, with a mixture of curiosity and contemptuous defiance. "Tell us, if you can, what it indicates."

"I need not look at it; I have only to take it," I replied, passing his hand between my own. "Its character is apparent to the touch. Its objects, tendencies, and occupations may be summed up in one word, *Pleasure*." The fine young gentleman withdrew his hand from mine, and turned as red as a fresh-boiled lobster.

One minute longer," I said, resuming it. "There are also good points about it which only require exercise and development. There is no want of intellect. There is also right-mindedness and sense of duty which may one day get the upper hand of vanity and self-indulgence." The fine young gentleman, abashed and thoughtful, resumed his seat without a word.

"What do you read on this?" inquired Maria, blushing slightly as she offered her hand.

"I read a good deal," I gravely replied, after carefully examining first one hand and then the other. "You dearly love all those about you; and, when you marry, you will dearly love your husband. But I see a wilfulness which might compromise your happiness. You would risk a good deal, and might even sacrifice your real welfare, to have your own way in everything. That is your great danger—the spirit of domination. But I see correcting influences. You will direct ably, but you will also consult. You will consider other people's wishes as well as your own, when you find them reasonable."

During this horoscopic speech, Mr. Greenwood grew more and more attentive.

"You have hit off Maria neatly enough," he said. "Let us now see what you will make of me." So saying, he frankly held out his hand, turning back his coat-cuff, to display wrist and all. It was an honest, prepossessing-looking hand, independent of any rules of palmistry.

"This hand," I said, "is one in ten thousand. In the first place, sir, you are a lucky man. If you were not born with a silver spoon in your mouth, it very soon found its way thither. Ill-luck never strikes you; when it threatens to hit you, it glances aside. Your very losses have turned out gains in the end. Your life will be long; your health good, as it ever has been. Intriguers have never succeeded in taking you

in. You loved your wife tenderly; and you have never married again, only because you love your daughter with equal tenderness."

"Anybody can prophesy in that style," said Mr. Howard, impatiently, "without knowing much of the secrets of nature. There is little risk of making a blunder by supposing a young man in brilliant health and of ample means to be fond of pleasure; that a pretty girl should love her husband, after being loved by him; that an only daughter, with no mother to consult, should like to have her own way, as I am sure she ought; that a gentleman with a fortune should be fortunate, which is equivalent to saying that prosperity is prosperous. Chiromancy like that is a farce. A gipsy at a fair would tell you as much or more. As to long life, continued health, permanent welfare, and success—they are too pleasant not to be put into a prediction when there is any wish to ingratiate oneself with the parties practised upon."

"If I had seen in those hands the reverse of what I did, I should not have hesitated to say so. Still, your criticism is not without apparent foundation. I *may* seem to be making plausible guesses. That I have not spoken by guess, is easily proved; for here is the book I go by. I can quote you the rules it gives."

"Mere quackery; you will never convince me there is anything in it."

"I am not myself convinced that there is. The responsibility rests with Desbarrolles. He tells me that there is a hand which is essentially voluptuous, giving itself up to indolent indulgence, and yet ardent after pleasure. It is a plump hand, almost swollen; its fingers are smooth and tapering, thick at their base, and with no knots or irregularities of form. Its skin is white and glossy, looking as if dirt would not adhere to it, sunshine tan it, nor frost redden it. It is dimpled; the palm is fleshy, the root of the thumb very largely developed. It is generally regarded as a beautiful hand. I think your friend's hand answers to this."

"And so does every lady's and gentleman's."

"Then," said Mr. Greenwood, "let us now see what *your* horoscope reveals."

"No, indeed, the thing is *too* childish; it is *too* palpable a piece of foolery," Mr. Howard replied.

"At least by way of pastime," Maria pleaded.

"We ought all to take our turns," urged the plump-handed friend.

"Be it, then, as you please," said Howard, offering his hand with a very bad grace.

I looked at it for some time aghast; then took the other and examined it; and then let both drop without uttering a syllable.

"You give no opinion," said Mr. Greenwood.

"I would rather not."

"I thought how it would be," said Howard.

"He has got to the end of his palmistry."

"I do not wish to give unnecessary pain," I explained, "and on those hands I see things not pleasant to read."

"Out with them at once," said the friend. "They are harmless if they are not true."

"Well, then, if I must, I must. You will not be offended. The Line of the Heart is scarcely perceptible: faithlessness, evil tendencies. The Saturnian Line runs straight from the base of the middle finger quite up to the wrist: chances of imprisonment and other heavy tribulations. The Mount of Mercury excessively developed: adroitness, not always restrained by scruples; skill in the arts of daily life, in writing and caligraphy, for instance. I now understand what prompted you to take tracings of the signatures in the travellers' books at sundry hotels."

"Ah, yes! I am completing a friend's collection of autographs."

"This talent, combined with the evil influence of the forked and crooked Line of the Head, might tempt men less easy in their circumstances to procure cash by means of forgery."

"But, sir, there is a limit to pleasantry——"

"It is the book which speaks, not I. Here it is all, chapter and verse."

At that moment the waitress of the hotel entered, and presented Howard with a letter of business-like aspect.

He opened and read it. For an instant he seemed surprised, not to say stunned; but recovered himself immediately.

"How unfortunate!" he exclaimed. "How very *mal à propos*! I am obliged to leave your delightful society."

"Not to-night, surely?"

"There is no help for it. My friend, Lord Castellinnaire, sends word that he is suddenly taken ill, and begs me to join him at Brienz as soon as possible. The worst of it is, that not only must I tear myself away, but I have left at Thun, with the bulk of my baggage, all the cash not required for this little excursion."

"That need not disturb you," said Mr. Greenwood. "I can let you have something till we meet again. How much will you like?"

"You are exceedingly kind. If we say ten pounds——"

"That is not enough. You don't know when you may get back to Thun. Take twenty; or, we'll say five-and-twenty. I have my cheque-book——"

"No, no, my *very* dear sir: no cheque, I thank you. I appreciate your kindness all the same; *indeed* I do. Ten pounds will be quite sufficient——*quite*."

"Yes; but my cheque-book! I had it a little while ago. It was in the pocket of my paletot, in the room where we washed our hands before dinner."

"Perhaps," I hinted, "by an accidental mistake, it has found its way into Mr. Percy Howard's paletot, not being able, in the twilight, to distinguish that gentleman's pocket from its own usual resting-place."

"Your joke is a little too absurd," said Mr. Greenwood, tickled at the notion nevertheless,

and handing with a smile a ten-pound note to Mr. Howard.

"*Very* much obliged," said the recipient. "But you, sir," to me, "do you mean to insult me?"

"It is not an insult," I replied, "nor yet a joke; but a serious suggestion. Do, if you please, feel in your pockets, and try if you cannot find it there."

"I shall do no such thing, sir," thundered Howard, simulating virtuous indignation, and working himself into a theatrical rage. "I am used to be treated as a gentleman; and were it not for the lady's presence——"

"Softly!" I said. "The case is very simple. Mr. Greenwood's cheque-book is missing. Oblige us by helping us to find it. Search if it has not wandered somewhere, quite by accident, of course. You have his ten-pound note; I am sure he has no wish to deprive you of it. But—did you notice my guide this morning?—the man who carried my knapsack up the Niesen? He is an agent of the Swiss police. The man who led Miss Greenwood's horse, and afterwards went on before us, is another. They are hunting up a little additional evidence against a person about whom they already entertain grave suspicions. They are in the house, within a moment's call. Shall we ask for their assistance to find the cheque-book?"

"Dear me! How very strange!" he ejaculated, with well-acted, because unblushing surprise. "Here it is! That I should not have felt it before! It must have fallen from your coat upon mine, and worked itself in, in the hurry of dressing. I am truly sorry that such a trifle should have caused us a moment's uneasiness. I am uncommonly delighted to have found it."

"And so am I," I dryly rejoined. "But allow me to hint that, however much we may regret to lose your company, the climate of Switzerland hardly agrees with you, and it might be prudent to change an air which is too sharp for you. Mr. and Miss Greenwood, as well as myself, would be sorry to see you—confined—to your room."

"You are probably right," he replied, unabashed. "I shall probably follow your friendly advice. The Alps do not quite suit me. It is a lovely evening—bright moonlight—for a leisurely stroll down the Niesen. I cannot miss the path. I shall leave the horse here, to avoid waking up the people at Wimmis; you can make use of it yourself to-morrow. I want no guide. Those men——" he hesitatingly added.

"I think you can do without either of them. They are probably supping below in the kitchen, and you can leave by the front door of the hotel. The Swiss authorities (who like things to go on smoothly) had just as soon avoid any unpleasantness which might have the effect of alarming strangers. I think they would not be displeased if you left their jurisdiction without being detained by any untoward event—arrested, for instance—by the severity of the weather."

"I am sure you are most considerate. By the

way, *would* you have the goodness to change this ten-pound note for French gold? It will be so much more handy."

"Most assuredly. Here it is."

"A thousand thanks. Good night. I wish you all a *very* good night."

He left the room with a most graceful bow, without a blush on his face or a falter on his tongue. He was gone. We looked at each other for a while in silence.

"Well, I never!" Miss Greenwood at last exclaimed.

"Nor I, exactly," rejoined her father.

"I suppose I have had a narrow escape from having the worth of my signature tested," the young epicurean quietly observed.

"But tell us," said Mr. Greenwood, "how you came to find out this gentleman's real character and avocations. It was not *all* chiromancy—eh?"

"Well, the facts are these. I had heard rumours at Thun. The Sunday evening I spent at Wimmis waiting for your arrival, I was alone. The showery weather kept me in-doors. No doubt you have been haunted by the ghost of a tune; that evening I was haunted by God Save the Queen. It would never finish. Just as the first strain was over for the twentieth time, and it was the second strain's turn to come on—Make her victorious, Happy and glorious—I heard it taken up by a chorus of voices without. Was it the force of imagination? I opened the window. No, it was not. At the foot of the Niesen, God Save the Queen is a popular air. When the chorus had died away, I left the window open, to enjoy the rushing sound of the Simme's waters and the wind whispering among the fir-trees. My thoughts were running on anything rather than Mr. Percy Howard's concerns, when grave voices in solemn debate rose from immediately beneath the window. I looked, and there was the Council of Village Notables assembled, standing in the open air in decorous order, in spite of the rain. One of the leaders was the landlord of the inn. Amongst other things, they discussed the expected presence of, and the measures to be taken with respect to, a suspicious stranger, who could be no other than our departed friend. After the meeting had broken up, the subject was resumed in the public room. The landlord advised forbearance and the avoidance of making any fuss, whilst another excited advocate for the purging Switzerland of *all* scum whatsoever, broke wine-glass after wine-glass by thumping them on the table to enforce his arguments. Between the two, I heard enough to remove from my mind all doubt or uncertainty. You have witnessed the sequel, and how chiromancy helped me to bring about the dénouement."

"And so the two men who acted as our guides are detectives on the track of our accomplished friend?"

"They are honest, simple, hard-working peasants, and no more policemen than you or I. It was a sudden idea of mine to invest them with that character, and you have seen the effect of a guilty conscience."

"But tell me now, seriously, Carter. Do you really believe in chiromancy?"

"I don't know enough about it to believe it. Without chiromancy, it is possible to form some opinion of the persons who cross our path. But you see at least that it is capable of furnishing a formidable weapon to artful persons. If it could but give me the hand of her I love, that is all I wish or care for."

Mr. Greenwood opened his eyes, and kept silence—the best move a man can make on many occasions. Perhaps he did not understand, I thought; or, understanding, was his silence consent?

I believe we all slept sweetly and soundly in that lone wooden inn on the top of the Niesen. We had agreed not to ask the sunrise to wait for us to witness it. We breakfasted together; took a last lingering look at the wondrous landscape spread around us; and then wended our way downwards. Aloft, was the silence of the wilderness; in descending, rural sounds again met our ears. There was the tinkling of bells worn by cows and goats, like distant village-peals ringing changes. The rush of waters and the rustling of leaves were once more audible.

On reaching the base of the mountain, Maria alighted from her horse. Taking her father's arm on one side and mine on the other, she said to him, "I have become acquainted with a secret, which ought not to remain a secret between us three. Mr. Carter and I am engaged, if we can only obtain your permission. Won't you let me have my own way, just for this once? Yes, dear father, I am sure you will."

Instead of looking immensely astonished, Mr. Greenwood kissed his daughter affectionately, and gave me a hearty shake of the hand.

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BLACK SHEEP!

By THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VII. A DILEMMA.

SOUTH MOLTON-STREET had apparently a strong attraction for Mr. James Swain. Perhaps he found it a profitable and productive situation in point of odd and early jobs, perhaps he had some less professional reason for frequenting it. However that may be, the fact existed that no day passed without his tousled head and imperfectly clad form making their appearance in the street two or three times between dawn and dark. He would hang about the precincts of the house in which Routh and Harriet lodged, and evinced an extraordinary preference for the archway in the vicinity as a dining-room. He might have been seen at irregular hours devouring saveloys, polonies, or, when jobs odd or even were not plentiful, hunches of bread and cheese, within the shelter of the archway, in the most unsophisticated attitudes, and with great apparent enjoyment. Mr. James Swain's face was not free from the underlying expression of care and anxiety which is always to be found by the careful observer in the countenance of the London street-boy, but it had more than the usual complement of sanciness, cunning, readiness, and impudence.

The boy had quite an attraction for Mrs. Routh, who would smile at him when she passed him in the street, nod pleasantly to him occasionally from her window, when his business or pleasure led him to lounge past the house before she had left her bedroom of a morning, and who frequently sent him of errands, for the doing of which she rewarded him with a liberality which appeared to him astounding munificence. Mr. James Swain was of a temperament to feel kindness, neglected street-boy though he was, and he had been wonderfully impressed by the womanly compassion which had spoken to him in Harriet's gentle tones on the morning of their first meeting, and had looked out of all the trouble and foreboding in her blue eyes. His interest in the Routh household, however, antedated that event, and received not only an additional access, but a fresh colouring from it, and an acute observer, supposing one to exist

for whom so mean a matter as the mental condition of a street-boy, very vulgar indeed, and without a particle of sentimental interest about him, could possess any attraction, would have discerned that a struggle of some sort was going on in the mind of the frequenter of South Molton-street, and seeker of odd jobs.

Routh, also, was not without interest for Jim Swain. Perhaps he watched him even more closely than he watched Harriet, but if he did, it was with totally different feelings. Routh had considerable powers of self-command, and could always be civil and apparently good tempered, no matter what his real humour might be, when it accorded with his interests to be so. But he was not a man to treat inferiors with courtesy, or to refrain from rudeness and brutality where they were safe, and unlikely to do him any discredit. Consequently, servants and other recipients of the outpourings of his temper hated him with a vivid cordiality. Jim, the street-boy, had been employed by him occasionally, and had formed, apart from certain other knowledge he had gained concerning Mr. Stewart Routh, the worst opinion of that gentleman's disposition and character.

"He's a bad 'un, anyhow," the boy muttered, as he watched Mr. Routh letting himself into the house he inhabited with his latch-key, having previously taken a handful of letters from a postman at the door. "An ill-lookin' dog, too. Scowled at the letters as if he was a-goin' to eat 'em. P'raps they're love-letters. I shouldn't wonder, now, as the lady is a pinin' for some 'un else, and he's jealous, and gets hold on all the letters to catch her out."

This bright idea, which Jim Swain derived from his habitual reading of penny romances, devoted to the delineation of the tender passion, afforded him considerable gratification, and he had already consumed several minutes and a cold sausage while turning it over in his mind, when Harriet Routh came out of the house, and passed him, as he leaned against the wall under the archway. She was very pale and quite absorbed in thought, so that, though she had respectfully pulled a tuft of his tousled hair in salutation, she did not perceive his presence.

"She's not like the same woman," mused Mr. James Swain; "she's gone as white as anything; looks just as if she'd had to git her own livin' for ever so long, and found it precious

hard to git, too. If he's jealous of her, and a ill treatin' of her, blowed if I won't peach! No, no, I won't, though, leastways not yet, 'cause I can't without lettin' out on myself, too; but," said the boy, with a long look which softened the cunning of his face strangely, "I would like to know as she was happier than I think she is."

In the wide city of London there was not another human being to feel any such wish in connexion with Harriet Routh. She was quite alone. She had so willed it, and circumstances had aided her inclination and her resolve. In the life which her husband had adopted, and she had accepted, intimacies, friendships, were impossible. The only relation between them and their kind was the relation between the swindler and his dupes, always a merely "business" connexion, and generally very brief in its duration. Harriet had not a female friend in the world. Perhaps she would not have had one under any circumstances; she was not a woman to cherish sentiment; the one love of her life was an overmastering passion, which had absorbed all lesser feelings; and the secretiveness and reserve, which were large elements in her moral nature, would have been inimical to such association, which, above all, needs gushiness for its satisfactory development. Her husband's male friends saw her seldom, and were not observant or interested in the health, spirits, or appearance of any but themselves; so there was no one but the street-boy to note the change that had passed upon her. Routh, indeed, observed it; with the bitter, selfish impatience of his character, and silently resented it. But only silently; he made no comment, and Harriet, for the first time, failed to interpret his feelings.

She *was* changed. Changed in face, in manner, in voice, in the daily habits of her life. The light had faded from her blue eyes, and with it their colour had paled. Her cheek had lost its roundness, and there was something set and stony in her face. It had been calm, now it was rigid. Her voice, still low and refined, was no longer musical, and her words were rare. Personal habits are tenacious, and rarely yield, even to strong mental excitement, or under the pressure of anxious care, and Harriet, always neat and careful in her simple dress, was neat and careful still. But a close observer would have marked a change even in this respect. She cared for her looks no longer. An ill-assorted ribbon, or ill-chosen colour, would once have been impossible to Harriet Routh; but it was all the same to her now. What were the symptoms of the moral change that had passed upon her as distinctly as the physical? They were rather those of intensification than of alteration. Her determination had assumed a sternness which had not before marked it, her identification of herself with Routh had become more than ever complete. The intensity of the passion with which she loved him was hardly capable of increase, but its quiet was gone. The pliable ease, the good-fellowship, the frank equality of

their companionship, had departed; and though her attention to his interests, her participation in his schemes, were as active and unceasing as ever, they were no longer spontaneous, they were the result of courageous and determined effort, sustained as only a woman can sustain effort which costs her acute and unrelenting suffering. She had been much alone of late. Routh had been much and profitably occupied. The affairs of the new company were progressing favourably, and Routh's visits to Flinders were frequent and well received. He had other things of the sort on hand, and his finances were in a flourishing condition. He was on the road to success, after the fashion of modern successes, and if his luck did not change, all the respectability which attaches to a fortunate speculation was on the cards for Stewart Routh. No restoration to his former place was possible, indeed; but Routh cared nothing for that, would, perhaps, not have accepted such a restoration had it been within his reach. Struggle, scheming, shifts, and the excitement consequent thereon, were essential to him now; he liked them; the only game he could play with any relish was the desperate one. To what extent he had played it was known only to himself and Harriet, and he was beginning to be afraid of his confederate. Not afraid of her trustworthiness, of her fidelity, of her staunch and unshrinking devotion; Stewart Routh was just as confident, as of the fact of his existence, that his wife would cheerfully have given her life for him, as she gave it to him, but the man's nature was essentially base, and the misused strength, the perverted nobility of hers, crushed and frightened him. He had not felt it so much while they were very poor, while all their schemes and shifts were on a small scale, while his every-day comforts depended on her active management and unflinching forethought. But now, when he had played for a great stake and won it, when a larger career was open before him—a career from which he felt she would shrink, and into which he could never hope to force her—he grew desperately afraid of Harriet. Desperately tired of her also. He was a clever man, but she was cleverer than he. He was a man of strong passions, ungovernable, save by the master-passion, interest. She had but one, love; but it was stronger than all his put together. And told to do their worst, and his shallow nature shrank from the unknown depths of hers. She loved him so entirely that there had never been a question of rule between them; but Routh was a wise man in his way, and he knew in his heart he could rule Harriet only by love, and love which was perfectly genuine and true, should the time ever come in which a distinct separation of opinion and will between them should make it necessary for him to try. But he had a clear appreciation of his wife's intellect also, and he knew thoroughly well that he could not deceive her with any counterfeit presentment—the love which should rule her must be real. This was precisely what he had not to produce when re-

quired. He had loved her after his fashion for so long that he was rather surprised by his own constancy; but it would have been difficult for Stewart Routh to go on loving any one but himself always, and Harriet was so much superior to him in strength, firmness, and disinterestedness, that her very superiority was an element of destruction for the love of such a man as he.

In all that concerned the business of Stewart Routh's life, Harriet's conduct was still the same as before—she was still industrious and invaluable to him. But the occupations which had filled her leisure hours were all neglected now, the lonely time was no more lightened by the pursuits which her early education and her natural tastes had endeared and rendered habitual to her. One of two moods now possessed her, either uncontrollable restlessness or absorbed brooding. She would start off, when Routh had left her, and walk for hours through the crowded thoroughfares, out into the suburbs of London, or up and down the most distant and least-frequented parts of the Parks, returning home weary and footsore, but with the torturing sense of restlessness unsubdued. Or, when she was alone, she would sit for hours, not in a selected position of comfort, but anywhere, on the first seat that came in her way, her head drooping, her eyes fixed and vacant, her hands closely clasped and lying in her lap, her fair low brow contracted by a stern and painful frown. From either of these two moods she rarely varied; and even in Routh's presence, one or the other would master her at times. It chanced that on the day when Jim Swain had seen Routh return to his lodgings, and take some letters from the postman, the restless fit had come very strongly upon Harriet, and she had gone to her room to dress herself for walking, when Routh unexpectedly returned. He went into the sitting-room, and concluding she would be down-stairs presently, waited for her, reading the letters in his hand frowningly the while. But Harriet had passed quietly down the stairs and gone out, without re-entering the sitting-room, and Routh waited in vain. At length he sought her in her room, and not finding her, he angrily rang the bell, and asked the servant if she knew anything about her. She did not, and Routh dismissed her, and began to stride about the room, uttering very uncalled-for objurgations on women who were never in the way when they were wanted. As he passed the window, his eye fell upon Jim Swain tranquilly eating bread and cheese, as he leaned against the opposite railings. Routh looked at him again more closely, and again; finally, he took up his hat, went down-stairs, out of the door, and across the street, close up to the boy.

"Hollo, you sir!" he addressed him roughly. "What are you doing here?"

Mr. James Swain eyed his questioner with no pleasant or grateful expression of countenance, and replied, curtly:

"Nothin'!"

"What brings you here, then?" continued Routh.

"I ain't a doin' you any harm, am I?" answered the boy, all his native impudence brought out in a moment by the overbearing manner of Routh. "It ain't your street, I believe, nor yet your archway, as I knows on; and if I chooses to odd job on this here lay, I don't hurt *you*, do I?"

The saucy manner of the lad did not anger Routh; he hardly seemed to notice it, but appeared to be entirely possessed by some struggling remembrance not of a pleasing kind, if his expression afforded any correct clue to it.

"Have you seen a lady come out of No. 60 since you have been about here?" he asked, passing by the boy's saucy remarks as if he had not heard them.

"Yes, I have. I saw the lady as lives there, not two minutes after you came in. She went that way." And he pointed down the street.

"Had she anything in her hand? Did she look as if she was going for a walk, or out shopping?"

"She hadn't no basket or bag, and she warn't partickler dressed; not as nice as she's dressed sometimes. *I should* say," continued Mr. Jim Swain, with an air of wisdom and decision, "as she was goin' for a constitutional, all by herself, and not to shop nor nothin'."

Routh's attention had wandered from the boy's words and was fixed upon his face.

"Have I ever seen you before?" he asked him, abruptly.

A sudden rush of colour dyed Mr. James Swain's face, even through the varnish of dirt which hid its surface, as he replied, with a little less than his customary boldness:

"Yes, sir, you've seen me, though in course you ain't likely to remember it. You've giv' me many a penny, and a sixpence too, and the lady."

Again Routh looked steadily, but covertly, at him under his thick brows. He was evidently eager to ask him some question, but he refrained, restrained by some powerful motive. Jim looked uneasily up and down the street, moved his feet about restlessly, turned his ragged pockets inside out, letting loose a multitude of dirty crumbs, and displayed a fidgety inclination to get away from South Molton-street.

"Well," said Routh, rousing himself from his abstraction, "we're going to move next week, and you can come and do the odd jobs for us, if you like."

"Thankee, sir," said Jim, who was very respectful now, and touched his ragged cap as if he had quite altered his opinion of the speaker. "What day shall I come, sir?"

"I don't exactly know," said Routh; "you can call and ask the lady." And then he gave the lad a shilling, to Jim Swain's intense surprise, and, crossing the street, once more let himself in at the door of No. 60. Having

reached the sitting-room, Stewart Routh sat down by the window and fell into a fit of musing as deep as those in which Harriet Routh passed hours away.

Mr. James Swain went briskly down the street, pleasantly conscious that the unexpected windfall of the shilling had released him from the labours of his calling for the day, and determined to proceed at once to lay it out to the greatest advantage.

"Whatever is he up to *now*?" Thus ran the street-boy's thoughts. "I'm sure he's jealous, or he wouldn't be coming home unexpected, and a watchin' of her like that. Ain't he a brute just? And a willin' too? Well, I'm glad I ain't *sure*—I'm very glad I ain't *sure*."

With this enigmatical phrase, Mr. James Swain abandoned his mental colloquy, and directed his thoughts to more immediately personal matters.

Routh was still sitting by the window when Harriet returned, and with the first glance at his face she saw that something new had occurred.

"I did not expect you home until six o'clock," she said, as she laid aside her bonnet, and stood by his side, laying her hand tenderly upon his shoulder.

"No," he returned; "I came home to get some papers for Flinders about the Tunbridge Canal business; but you have them, Harry, and you were out."

"Well?" she said, calmly, looking at him with questioning eyes. "What has happened, Stewart?"

"This," he returned, slowly, and without meeting her gaze. "As I came in I met the postman with this letter. Read it, and tell me what is to be done."

She sat down close beside him, and took the letter he held towards her. It was addressed to George Dallas, to the care of Routh, and it was, in fact, the letter which Mr. Carruthers had written to his step-son prior to his departure from Poynings. As Harriet read, her right hand sought her husband's, and held it tightly. The old look of quiet resolution, the old expression of confident resource, came into her face. She read the paper twice before she spoke.

"Stewart," she said, "this is only another head of the hydra, and we had counted them, had we not? What we have to decide is, whether this letter shall be suppressed, or whether it must be forwarded to George Dallas. At first sight, I see no possibility of suppressing it without infinite danger, but this is only first sight, and we may see more clearly afterwards."

"Dallas has never said anything to you about letters from his mother, has he?" asked Routh.

"No," replied Harriet, "not since his second letter, when he said he supposed she was testing his repentance and good conduct, and that he would not write until he could give her some proof of both."

"Get the old woman's letter, and let us read it again."

Harriet went to her writing-table, opened a drawer, and took a paper from its recesses. It was the letter which Mrs. Brookes had written to George Dallas. The two read it carefully, and Harriet spoke first.

"We can only conjecture the meaning of this, Stewart; but, as I make it out, it means that the proceedings at the—the inquest"—she paused almost imperceptibly, then went on, in a steady tone—"awakened his mother's fears. It was lucky he told us the story of his mother's anxiety about his coat, or we should have failed to catch the clue. Now I read the riddle thus: Mrs. Carruthers has been dangerously ill in consequence of the shock of the discovery, but she has not betrayed her knowledge or suspicions. A good deal of time has been gained, and under any circumstances that is a priceless advantage. The question now is, can any more time be gained? Can George Dallas be kept in ignorance of the appearances against him any longer? The suppression of the old woman's letter was an easy matter. It is ill-written, you see, as servants' letters usually are; indistinctly addressed, and generally unimportant. But a letter written by Mr. Carruthers of Poynings is quite another matter. It must come out, some time or other, that it was not received, and he is precisely the man to investigate the matter to the utmost. No, no, the letter must be sent to Dallas."

She spoke firmly, but her eyes were dreamy and distant. Routh knew their expression, and that some expedient, some resolve, was shaping itself in her mind. He sat quite silent until she spoke again.

"The first thing we have to do is to ascertain with all possible exactitude the real condition of Mrs. Carruthers, where she is at present, and whether we are right in supposing her fears were excited. This letter is not calculated to bring George home, I think. Of course, if it had reached him before they left Poynings, he would have come home at once; but, see, Mr. Carruthers writes on the 10th, and says they are to start on the 11th. This is the 13th. What is the postmark?"

"Dover," said Routh, handing her the envelope.

"Posted after they left England, no doubt," said Harriet. "Stewart, there is just one thing to be done. Let us move from this at once. It is only doing so a little sooner than we had intended. Then, if we decide on suppressing the letter, its loss may be accounted for, even to the satisfaction of Mr. Carruthers. This while we consider what must be done."

"Yes," said Routh, "I think that will be wise; but I do not see my way out of the danger of his return, if he returns when he has received the letter. He will go down to Amherst at once, and will discover the suspicion, and at once take steps to clear himself of it."

"Perhaps so," said Harriet, and her face darkened, "but he may not find that so easy. I

hope he will not put himself into the danger ; but if he does——" She paused, and looked thoughtfully into her husband's face, while a quick shudder crept over her. He saw the look in her eyes, he felt the quiver in her hand, and frowned darkly.

"Don't take to melodrama, Harriet, it's so unlike you, and doesn't suit you. Besides, it's too late in the day for that kind of thing now."

She took no notice of the ungracious speech, but still stood looking thoughtfully at him. He rose, letting her hand drop from his shoulder, and walked up and down the room.

"Stewart," she said, gently, "you must not be impatient with me if I am not as ready of resource as I was. However, I think I see what ought to be done in this emergency, and I am quite sure I can do it. I will go to Amherst, find out the true state of things there, see the old woman at Poynings, who will gladly receive me as a friend of George Dallas, and then, and then only, can we decide whether this letter is to reach him or not."

"By Jove! Harry, that's a splendid idea," said Routh, "and there can't be any risk in it, for Dallas would take your doing it as the greatest kindness. You not so ready of resource as you were? You're more so, my girl—you're more so."

There was a little wonder in the look she turned upon him, a little surprise at the lightness of his tone, but not a ray of the pleasure which his perverted praise had once given her.

"This is the best thing to do," she said, gravely, "and I will do it at once. I will go to-morrow morning."

"And I will get our traps moved, and put up at the Tavistock till you come back. You can pack this evening, I suppose, Harry?"

"Oh yes," she answered. "I shall be glad of the occupation."

"And you'll do it more easily without me," said Routh, whom no crisis of events, however serious, could render indifferent to his individual comforts, and to whom the confusion of packing was an image of horror and disgust, "so I shall dine out, and leave you to your own devices. Here, you had better lock these up." He took the letters from a table on which she had laid them as she spoke, and held them towards her.

She drew a step nearer to him, took the papers from his hand, then suddenly let them drop upon the floor, and flung her arms wildly round Routh's neck.

"Harriet, Harriet," he said, "what's this?" as he strove to lift her face, which she held pressed against his breast with terrible force. She answered him with a groan—a groan so full of anguish, that his callousness was not proof against it.

"My love, my darling, my brave girl, don't, don't!" was all he could say, as he bent his head over her, and held her tightly to him. For several moments she stood thus; then she lifted her white face, put up her hands and drew his face down to hers, kissed him with kisses which thrilled him with an unknown sense of fear and doom, and instantly releasing, left him.

Mr. James Swain got the promised odd job in South Molton-street sooner than he had expected it, for calling at No. 60, according to Mr. Routh's instructions, to ask the lady when his services would be required, he was informed that she had gone away, and he was to carry down the boxes to be conveyed to their destination in the van then standing at the door. Jim performed his duty with a perturbed spirit.

"Gone away, is she?" he said, over and over again. "Now I should like to know where she's gone, and wot for. I hope he ain't be up to nothin' agin her, but I don't trust him, and I ain't a goin' to lose sight of him for longer than I can help, if I knows it, until she's safe back somewheres."

"That funeral is largely attended for a small town," said Harriet Routh to the waiter at the inn at Amherst, who was laying the cloth for her dinner. She was sitting by a window on the ground floor, and idly watching the decorous procession as it passed along the main street, to the huge admiration of gaping boys and gossiping nursemaids.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the man, gladly seizing the opportunity of approaching the window, and having a peep on his own account.

"He was very much respected, was old Mr. Evans; no one in the town more so. He gave the best of measures, and used the best of materials, and a charitabler man, nor a constanter at meetin', though uncommon deaf latterly, ain't in Amherst."

Harriet looked inquiringly at the speaker.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, you're a stranger, of course, and don't know nothin' about poor old Evans. He were a tailor, ma'am, at Amherst, man and boy, for fifty year and more, and got a deal of custom, which they do say no tailor here won't have for the future, seein' as they can't compete with the Sydenham suits."

Harriet made no comment upon the man's little discourse, and he left the room. When she was alone, she smiled a smile not good to see, and said, half aloud:

"I remember how they used to talk about Providence, and providential interventions on behalf of the good, long ago, when I used to fancy I believed in Providence, and when I certainly did believe in the existence of the good. I wonder what these people would call *this*? If it is a providential intervention, the theory has two sides."

CHAPTER VIII. ON THE DEFENSIVE.

THE announcement of a lady who wished to see Mrs. Brookes caused the faithful old woman no particular emotion. She was well known and much respected among the neighbours of Poynings, in the humbler sense, and visits from several of their number were ordinary events enough in her life. The announcement found her, not in her own room, but in her mistress's, where she had replaced the portrait of George, and was sitting looking at it with dim eyes and

clasped hands. The time had been long in rolling over her weary old head; for, though she had passed the period of life in which feeling is very keen, and sorrow has power to torture, and constancy to last, Mrs. Brookes had no other objects to divide her thoughts with Mrs. Carruthers and her son, and day by day the old woman had brooded upon the new trouble which had come to those whom she loved so well. Perplexity mingled with her grief, for she knew not what to think. She had stoutly denied the possibility of George's guilt, in the memorable dialogue which had been the last she had held with his mother; but the faint and fluttering hope she entertained was very different from the confidence she expressed, and now, in the solitude and silence of the great house, in the absence of the absorbing demand which Mrs. Carruthers's condition had made upon all her attention and self-command, her stout old heart sank within her. His mother was gone away from all the scenes and associations which had come to have a terrible meaning. Would she ever return? Ellen hardly knew how she wished to answer this question. It were better and happier perhaps that she never did, that her tired heart should drowsily beat itself to rest in a strange country, and lie hidden under another soil than that her son had stained with blood. Had he done this thing? What of him? Where was he? The orderly house, the well-regulated household, needed little of the old housekeeper's supervision. The absence of the family made little difference. No cleaning days interrupted the decorous order of things in an establishment in which it would have savoured of indecorum to suppose that the rule of absolute cleanliness was ever superseded. Alterations and repairs were innovating interruptions altogether incompatible with Poynings, and, in fact, there was little or nothing to break the dead level to which old Ellen had looked forward as that of her days when she should be left alone in the stately house, and which had begun to realise itself at once.

Dixon had accompanied her mistress to foreign parts; and it was Martha, housemaid, who told Mrs. Brookes that a lady, who had been shown into her own room, wanted to see her.

"Which, I dare say, she's come after Susan's character," remarked Martha, parenthetically, "for she ain't this side Hamherst, I know."

Mrs. Brookes rose from the chair that she had placed opposite George's picture, took off her spectacles, from which she wiped a suspicious moisture, placed them carefully in her pocket, arranged her cap and shawl, and, without vouchsafing any answer to the speculations of Martha, she took her way slowly to the housekeeper's room. As she crossed the hall she saw a fly standing at the open door, and the driver, a man from Page's, touched his hat to her as she passed.

"I don't know this lady," she thought. "Nobody about here takes a fly to come to Poynings."

Her visitor was seated on the heavy horse-

hair sofa, which, in the winter, flanked the fire, but was now drawn close under the window through which George had entered on that memorable night, which came freshly into the memory of the old woman at that moment. As she looked sharply at the figure which rose to greet her, Mrs. Brookes felt in a moment that she was in the presence of a woman with some purpose.

The fixedness of Harriet Routh's face, the effort of a smile (for loneliness told upon her nerves now with rapidity and power), a something forced and painful in her voice, aroused an instinctive fear in Mrs. Brookes, and put her on her guard. She made a stiff bow and a movement with her body, which, when she was younger, would have been a curtsy, but was now only a duck, and asked her visitor's pleasure.

"I have called upon you, Mrs. Brookes," said Harriet, in a sweet and winning tone, "in consequence of a paragraph which I have seen in a newspaper."

It was an unfortunate beginning, for it set the old nurse instantly on her guard by arousing her suspicions, and making her resolve that the blue-eyed, sweet-spoken lady, who looked as if she had a purpose, should get nothing out of her.

"Indeed," she replied, very stiffly. "Please to sit down, ma'am."

Harriet resumed her seat, and began to speak rather quickly. Mrs. Brookes looked at her steadily, immovably, having put on her spectacles for the purpose, but gave her neither encouragement nor assistance by so much as a sound or a nod.

"I am Mrs. Routh," she said, "and a friend of Mr. George Dallas, Mrs. Carruthers's son. It is on his account and for his sake I have come here."

Mrs. Brookes's black-mitted hands pressed each other more closely as they lay clasped together in her lap, but she made no sign.

"I am aware of the unfortunate circumstances which keep Mr. Dallas and his mother apart," continued Harriet, who maintained a watch upon the old woman as steady as her own, but more covert; "and I am afraid he will be much distressed and alarmed if this reaches him without any preparation."

She held out a newspaper as she spoke, a newspaper she had procured at the inn at Amherst, and pointed to the paragraph which recorded the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings and suite for the Continent; and, in addition, the regret with which "we" had learned that the departure in question had been occasioned by the dangerous illness of Mrs. Carruthers. Mrs. Brookes was immensely relieved, but not altogether reassured. She had a vague idea that the business of detection was sometimes entrusted to women, and she still had her doubts of the blue-eyed, sweet-spoken lady whose face indicated a purpose, without betraying it.

"Mr. Dallas knows of his mother's illness,"

said Mrs. Brookes. "He will not hear of it first from any newspaper."

"Indeed," said Harriet. "I am glad to know that. I am much relieved. Mr. Dallas is so intimate with Mr. Routh, my husband, and we are so much attached to him, that anything which is of importance to him concerns us. I am on my way to Dover, and I thought I would turn out of it a little to inquire into this matter."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Mrs. Brookes, still unsoftened. "May I ask if you have left your house in London?"

"We have for the present," replied Harriet; "indeed, I don't think we shall return there."

Mrs. Brookes looked confused and distressed.

"Excuse me," she said, after an awkward pause, "if I appear at all impertinent. I am George Dallas's old nurse, and more his mother's friend than her servant, and I can't be particular about other people when they are concerned. George Dallas is not as welcome here as he ought to be in his mother's house; you say you know that. If you really are Mrs. Routh, you ought to know more about him than that—more, in fact, than I do."

"Certainly," said Harriet, with unchanged sweetness of tone, and just the least gleam of colour in her cheek, showing that she was approaching her object. "I do know a great deal more about George Dallas than you do, if, as I conclude from your words, nothing has been heard of him since his last visit to his mother."

She paused very slightly, but Mrs. Brookes did not utter a word.

"You are quite right to be cautious, Mrs. Brookes; in such a delicate family matter as this, caution is most essential. Poor George has been so foolish, that he has laid himself open to being harmed either by enemies or injudicious friends; but I assure you, Mrs. Brookes, I am neither. I really am Mrs. Routh, and I am quite in George's confidence, and am here solely with the purpose of saving him any trouble or anxiety I can."

"Where is he?" asked the old woman, suddenly, as if the question were forced upon her.

"He is at Amsterdam, in Holland," replied Harriet, in a frank tone, and changing her seat for one beside Mrs. Brookes, as she spoke; "here are several letters from him. See," and she drew half a dozen sheets of foreign paper, closely written over, from her pocket, and put them into the old woman's hands. She beheld the letters with mingled pleasure and avoidance: they could not answer the question which tormented her, but they relieved her misgivings about her visitor. She felt assured now that she really was speaking to Mrs. Routh, and that the object of her visit was one of kindness to George. The letters were in his well-known hand; the thin paper and the postmarks satisfied her that they came from abroad. He was still out of the country, then; so far there was safety, but she must be cautious still concerning him. What if she could make Harriet the unconscious

bearer of a further warning to him—a warning carefully contrived so that none but he should know its meaning, and he should understand it thoroughly? She would try. She had thought all this while she turned the letters over in her hands; then she returned them to Harriet, and said:

"Thank you, ma'am. I see these are from Master George, and it's plain he has great confidence in you. He never answered a letter I sent him: it went to your house."

"All communications for him are addressed to Mr. Routh," said Harriet, "and forwarded at once."

"Well, ma'am, he never told me where he had gone to, or wrote a letter but one to his mother; and when that came, she was too ill to read it, or know anything about it."

"Indeed," said Harriet, in a tone of commiseration; "she must have been taken ill just after he saw her, then?"

"She was," returned Mrs. Brookes, emphatically, "and you, ma'am, know, no doubt, why she saw him, and can understand that his conduct caused her illness."

"Not exactly that," said Harriet. "He told me all that had passed, and described his mother as full of forgiveness and hope, and he even said how well and handsome he thought her looking. George amuses us very much by constantly talking of his mother's beauty; he will be all the more distressed when he hears of her illness, now, and I really think, Mrs. Brookes, it cannot be quite fair to impute it to his conduct."

"It was just that, and nothing else," said the old woman; and her voice shook as she spoke, though she strove to control it. "It was, indeed, ma'am, and you must tell him the truth, without softening it, or making it any better. Tell him that she nearly died of the knowledge of his conduct, and that her mind is weakened, and her memory gone."

"Her memory gone!" exclaimed Harriet. "You don't mean to say it is so bad as that?"

"I do, indeed," said Mrs. Brookes. "And will you tell him exactly what I tell you. Tell him that his mother has forgotten all that led to her illness, all the fear and suspense she underwent. Of course she was frightened at what she had to do; and in suspense until it was done; but I am sure she has not forgotten him, and if he were to see her, or even be mentioned to her suddenly, it might have the worst effect. Be sure to tell him this, and that the only thing he can do to atone for the past in any way is to keep out of his mother's sight. He knows some of this already, for I wrote to him, and he knows from Mr. Carruthers that his mother is gone away."

"From Mr. Carruthers?" said Harriet, in a tone of admirably simulated surprise; "does he ever communicate with George?"

"My master is a very just man," replied Mrs. Brookes, in a stately tone, "and he would not allow his wife's son to be kept in ignorance of his mother's danger. I am sure he will

send for him, wherever he may be, if there is no chance of her recovery. I don't say he would send for him sooner."

"Of course Mr. Carruthers has no idea of the cause of Mrs. Carruthers's illness?"

"No, no; it was her fear of his finding out that George had been here, and what for, that brought it on; but, of course, he did not suspect anything."

"It is very strange," said Harriet, musingly; "she seems to have borne all this business perfectly well at the time, and given way completely afterwards. It must have surprised *you* very much, Mrs. Brookes, though, no doubt, you understand your mistress's constitution."

"Yes," replied the old woman, dryly, and ignoring the beginning of the sentence, "I understand my mistress's constitution."

"I will give your message to Mr. Dallas," said Harriet, rising, "and I had better leave you our temporary address, unless, indeed, you would prefer writing to Mr. Dallas direct."

"No," said Mrs. Brookes, "I have nothing to say. When news of his mother comes from abroad, I will send it to you."

The old woman was constrained and miserable in her visitor's presence, but the hospitality of Poynings must be vindicated; and she felt, besides, that Mrs. Carruthers would, in other days, have been glad of an opportunity of being kind to any one who had been kind to George. So she pressed Harriet to take some refreshment and to prolong her visit. But Harriet would not touch bread or wine in the house, and told Mrs. Brookes she must return to Amherst immediately, to catch the train for Dover. "I dined at the inn in the town," she said, in explanation of her refusal, "as I had to wait awhile before I could get a fly."

"I hope they made you comfortable, ma'am," said Mrs. Brookes, who had resumed, when their interview assumed a common-place complexion, her head-servant-like manner. "Page's people are obliging, and it is a respectable house."

"Very much so indeed," returned Harriet, carelessly. "The town seems a clean dull sort of place. I had a funeral to look at while I waited for my dinner, and the waiter entertained me with the biography of the deceased."

"I had not heard of a death at Amherst," said Mrs. Brookes, primly. She did not like the flippant tone in which her visitor spoke. "The servants have not been in the town this week."

"An estimable person—one Evans, a tailor, I believe; so the waiter said," Harriet returned, still more carelessly, as she took up her parasol and railway-guide, glanced covertly at the old woman's face, and moved to the door.

Mrs. Brookes stood quite still for several seconds; then she followed Harriet, joined her at the red-baize door which opened into the hall, accompanied her to the great door, where a footman waited, took a respectful leave of her, and then shut herself up in her room, and

remained invisible to the household for the remainder of the day.

As Harriet Routh drove back to Amherst, she leaned her head wearily against the uncongenial woodwork of the fly, and summed up the results of her journey.

"Whatever the mother knows, the old woman knows. The old woman is as staunch as steel, and she will conceal her suspicions all the more tenaciously, the stronger they are; and I have strengthened them. What a clever old woman she is, and how brave! If my purpose had been what she suspected, I should have had some real difficulty in getting the information I required. It is clear that nothing is to be feared now, in this direction. Mrs. Brookes will never speak. Mrs. Carruthers is in the best possible condition for our purposes, and her son has no pretext for returning to Poynings, even if the death of the tailor had not made it quite safe for him to do so."

She did not look out upon the fair scene through which she was passing. To her, all beauty of nature was a dead thing; she had no heart-throbs of exultation in "the pomp that fills the summer circuit of the hills;" no sense of its serene loveliness reached her busy brain, or tempted her troubled brooding eyes. When she occasionally lifted them, in shifting her position, they might have been blind for any knowledge of the sunshine or the greenery that was in them. "I will write to him," she went on in her thoughts, "just what she told me to say. Poor George! It is hard to have to make him believe that he has broken his mother's heart, and turned his mother's brain. He does not deserve it, fool as he is. He is easily persuaded, fortunately. I don't feel fit for much that is not easy now. The letter must be sent on at once, and, if I do my part well, and this woman dies, or remains abroad—and I fancy Mr. Carruthers is not the man to bring an imbecile wife back, if he can help it—there's no reason why George should come to England again for years, that I can see."

The driver of the fly pulled up for a minute, and, letting down one of the front windows, inquired whether he was to go to the inn or to the railway station. While Harriet was answering his question by desiring him to drive to the station, and looking out of the window, a young girl on horseback, a large black Newfoundland dog galloping by her horse's side, passed the fly. The driver touched his hat respectfully, and the young lady acknowledged the salute with her whip.

"That's Miss Carruthers, ma'am," said the man to Harriet, giving her the information in a manner which duly indicated the local importance of Miss Carruthers. Harriet looked back at the girl, and noted the golden gleam of her beautiful hair, the easy swaying of her graceful figure, the air of youth and refinement which characterised her.

"That's Miss Carruthers, is it?" she thought.

"George has never seen her, I fancy, as he never mentioned her to me."

She had some time to wait for the train, and she went into the waiting-room. But she found it already occupied by some cheery, chatty women and children, returning from a holiday excursion. Their idle talk, their careless laughter, jarred—with her mood; the children looked askance at her, and hushed their prattle; the women drew close together on the hard high leather bench which lined the room, a solemn mockery of a divan, and moderated their tones to a prim gentility. Harriet perceived the effect her presence produced, smiled slowly, and went out again upon the platform, which she paced from end to end, until the train came up, listening idly to the raised voices and renewed laughter which reached her through the open door.

When all the other passengers had taken their places, Harriet got into a carriage which had no other occupant, and so travelled up to London alone.

Routh was in the house when she reached the Tavistock, and was surprised at her speedy return. She told him how the intelligence she had heard on her arrival at Amherst had simplified her task of investigation. She made her narrative as brief as possible, she spoke in a cold-measured voice which had become habitual to her, and which filled Routh with intense concealed irritation; and she never looked at him until she had concluded.

"I'll post the letter from the old fellow at once, then," said Routh; "it's only a couple of days late, and Dallas is too careless to notice that. When you write—you'd better not do it for a day or so, lest he might take it into his head to suspect you of a motive—you can tell him about our move."

Harriet acquiesced, and changed the subject to their new residence, a furnished house in Mayfair. She would go there on the morrow, she said, and arrange all their little property. Had everything been removed from South Molton-street?

Everything. Routh had seen to it himself, and had employed the boy who was always about there.

"Ay," said Harriet, dreamily, for she was thinking of the time, gone for ever, when she had been happy in the home she had left without one regret or hope. "What of him?"

"Nothing that I can make out," answered Routh, irritably. "But I hate the sort of half-recollection I seem to have of him. There's something in my mind connected with him, and I can't disentangle it."

Harriet looked up at her husband in some surprise, and turned very pale. She had a painful, an indelible remembrance connected with the first time she had seen Jim Swain. But Routh knew nothing of that; so she said nothing; she made no effort to aid his memory. She would avoid the torture when she could. Besides, she was utterly weary in body and in spirit.

Mr. Carruthers's letter reached George Dallas

not exactly duly, indeed, but after a delay which would have astonished and exasperated the writer, had he known it, to the last degree.

Stewart Routh and Harriet were very much superior to George Dallas in many mental attributes, and in particular in cunning; but they were incapable of understanding the young man on certain points. One of these points was his love for his mother, with its concomitants of remorse, repentance, and resolution. Not comprehending this mixed feeling, they made a serious miscalculation. The day or two which Harriet allowed to intervene before she wrote the letter which was to prolong George's absence, exactly sufficed to bring him to England.

MY ORDERLY.

LET me first state that this Orderly of mine (No. 1) is a strong, stout, apparently unsentimental fellow. For the rest, an honest or a braver man never breathed. After some hardships and dangers encountered during the day, we were sitting round a large fire of sandalwood, a luxury you can't afford in England. Lying upon the ground at night, half starved by day, we can often enjoy a fire that our Queen might envy; for this wood, when burning, gives out a delicious odour.

And now My Orderly (No. 1) speaks.

"I had a mate in Californy. I won't tell his surname, sir. Many bad characters were there, and for self-defence Harry and I kept much to ourselves. So I got to know him well, and to love him well too, for he was a man in every way. We were very fortunate, and made a pile, when one day Harry said to me:

"Tom, old man, I'll go home and marry Peggy."

"This brought me up standing, for I didn't see how I could part with him. I took the pipe out of my mouth and looked at him without speaking. I think he saw how it was, for he said immediately:

"I'll bring her out, you know, old fellow, to whatever part of Australey you go to, as we're going to leave this."

"Not on my account, Harry, I says."

"No," says he, 'but on my own account; on Peggy's account. Old man, I know you, and we don't part so easy.' Ah, he was so good-hearted, were Harry.

"Well, sir, the short and the long of it was, that we squared up. I saw him on board ship in no time—for it was a long engagement with Peggy—and I helped him to hurry away. This was, I think, in '48 or '49. I had told him I was bound for Sydney, and to direct letters to the post-office there. I went off to Sydney, had a try at the Bathurst diggings; came down after a long while and found a letter waiting for me from Harry. He wasn't an educated man, sir, but I declare I have read in grand books things not half so good as what I have read in his letters. He

told me of his meeting with Peggy. Shall I tell you of that, sir?"

"Of course, my man," I said, "tell me all you can of Harry."

"When Harry, on his return to Ireland, reached the town of Cavan, where Peggy was born, and where" (here My Orderly, No. 1, hesitated in an odd way), "and where," he went on, "I was born too. What did Harry do but put on his old digger's clothes that he had kept safe, makes inquiries whether the old curmudgeon, Peggy's father, was still alive, and all that, finds he is alive, and goes at dusk to the little cottage outside the town."

"They didn't know him at first, for the sun out here doesn't improve a man's complexion; but he soon made himself known, and Peggy fell into his arms in a dead faint. Her father was in an awful passion. He had always opposed the courtship most bitter."

"What," says he, "are you come back, you vagabond, to steal about my place again by night as you did long ago, when you wanted my child to run away with you?"

"No, sir," says Harry, "don't you see I am coming openly now? I haven't been able to forget Peggy, and she hasn't forgot me; so now, Mr. Hickey, will you give her to me?"

"Why, you madman," says Hickey, "am I likely to give my child to a man in rags? What a hopeless profligate you must be not to be able to have done better in Californy than to come home in the clothes you're in."

"Mr. Hickey," says Harry, "I am willing to work hard for your daughter as an honest man, and we love each other and can't get over it. Will you give her to me or no?"

"Begone, you beggar," shouts the other, "or I may forget myself in my own house."

"All right, sir," says Harry; "but you'll be sorry for this."

"Two days after Peggy walked out quietly and was married to the man of her choice."

"Exactly one week after this, an old man was shown into a comfortable sitting-room in a neighbouring town. Harry and his wife had just dined. Peggy started up."

"Don't speak to me now, Peg," said the old man, who seemed to have a sore-throat. "Go into another room for a minute or two."

"She looked anxiously at her father and her husband for a second, was satisfied, and walked away."

"O Harry, O dear Harry," said the old man, "on my knees I ask your forgiveness. I couldn't do it before my child, but do you know *all* you have done? My poor old wife and myself would have been driven out upon the highway only for you."

"Father-in-law," says Harry, "you know I would have done it for *her* sake alone; but I declare I think I would have done it even for the sake of showing to an old man that there's a better way of using money than hoarding it."

"Harry had found that old Hickey had got into unlucky entanglements, that the screw

was about to be applied; so he went to the creditors, paid them, and sent receipts to Hickey for one thousand one hundred pounds."

"Some time after this," continued My Orderly (No. 1), "I heard of great diggings in Port Philip, and I wrote to Harry, telling him I intended to go there. Off I started, reached Bendigo, pitched my tent on Eagle Hawk Gully, and was getting any amount of gold. Why, sir, you couldn't believe it unless you was there."

"I was there," I said, "and at the earliest period, so go on."

"I had left directions," continued My Orderly (No. 1), "with a friend in Melbourne to forward my letters to the Bendigo post-office, and one day I got a letter telling me that Harry and Peggy and their little girl would be in Melbourne almost as soon as the letter would reach me."

"O Lord, how I did ride down to Melbourne! They hadn't arrived, though, and I had to wait for more than a week, but this gave me means to have everything comfortable for them when they should arrive. For what an awful place it was! Tender ladies continually landing, and from want of room in Melbourne compelled to go into tents; and their little children almost starving, and eaten alive with musquitoes and vermin—upon my soul, sir, I don't like to talk about it."

"They came at last and—well, well, I suppose I must confess it, but it was the only time that ever a woman told *me* not to—not to—feel a thing so much. You're not laughing at me, sir?" said My Orderly (No. 1), interrupting himself.

"No, I am not, indeed, Tom. Go on."

But I must inform the reader that here Tom showed great reluctance to go on; and before he *did* go on he gave utterance to sobs so exceedingly like sobs suppressed in a manly way, that I felt my own feelings considerably touched, because I knew his character so well.

"Their little girl, now between three and four years of age—what is the use of my trying to describe her? She was like an old woman in sense, but was as gay and light-hearted and full of childish sport as the queen of the fairies herself. Such talk as hers was! But then, you see, Peggy was a good and true woman, Harry was a good and true man, so she was kept from evil example. I assisted them in what they did for her."

Here there was another pause of some length.

"I will tell you a secret, sir, that I didn't intend to tell. Peggy and I had been reared together, and she was the only being I ever loved in the same way. It was me that brought Harry and her together. I saw too late they could only be happy with each other. I knew what a good fellow he was. It was me that put it in his head to go to Californy, and I went with him to help him make his fortune and marry her. For, you see, it was a hopeless case for me, and why shouldn't I do all I could for two such dear friends?"

"Well, when they all got out, Harry would have it that wife and child must go with him and me to Bendigo. I wished them to be left in some respectable lodging-house, but Harry was obstinate.

"It's no use talking, Tom," says he; "I will not leave them in this rowdy place. Things are bad, indeed, as you say, at Eagle Hawk, but I'll have a first-rate marquee for them, and I'll pitch it always near where we work; so they'll be all right."

"We went up to Bendigo in a spring waggon, well roofed, and arrived in safety. The marquee was pitched quite close to our 'claims,' and in a short time Peggy was as happy as possible. Her life not laborious, as you may guess, sir; for we even got washing done for her, which is much to say in the case of a digger's wife.

"I really do think that the happiest days I ever spent in my life were the days I spent there, working hard with Harry for a few hours, and spending most of my evenings with Peggy, the little girl, and Harry. My God! what a queer power some children have over a man! I'll give you an instance.

"One evening little Lizzy was sitting on my knee very silent; all at once she says:

"Do oo ever say oor prayers?"

"Now this took me quite aback, for I had promised my mother, many years before, never to neglect *this*. I didn't know well what to answer, so I said:

"Why do you ask me that, Liz?" And her answer was stranger:

"Because I like oo, Tom, and because I want God to like oo. God won't like oo if oo don't say oor prayers."

"And then the little thing slid down from my knee, knelt on the ground, and said:

"Pray God make Tom good; pray God like Tom; pray God make Tom say his prayers."

There was a tremendous pause after this. My Orderly seemed to have swallowed one of those confounded mosquitoes, and was trying hard for a long time to get it up. I made a remark to encourage him, and he went on.

"We had to shift our quarters, at last, from want of water, so we went to another gully at some distance, where there was much deep sinking. We sunk several holes, and did pretty well for some time.

"When here, I met a man that I felt at once a deadly hatred to. It's not my nature, and it was a very strange thing. I met him at a grog-shop; for I wasn't a saint, and used to take my glass now and then. This fellow was a tall, lanky, black-browed fellow, with a scowl—well, when he tried to laugh, why, of the two, I preferred the scowl.

"He seemed to dislike every human being except little Lizzie, but he really acted as though he liked her. Every time he passed our camp and saw her, he would try to make her take a small nugget, or a few raisins, or currants, or walnuts. The child always refused his gifts. She shuddered when he spoke to her, and used to run up to Harry or me for protection.

"Harry shared with me this feeling of hatred, for it was nothing else; and when persons have such feelings as these it does not take much to make a quarrel; so a quarrel did take place between Harry and this man Cornish, and Harry gave him an awful hammering. As Cornish was leaving the place, he held up his finger in a threatening way to Harry, and gave him such a devilish look out of his battered eyes as I shall never forget to my dying day. Harry only laughed at him, and asked him if he wanted any more? But I well remembered a similar gesture that I read of in Sir Walter Scott's tale of the 'Two Drovers,' and I felt very uneasy.

"At length the gully began to thin. Men left their claims, and no others came in their place. Our hole was cleared out, and there was nothing for it but to go 'prospecting.'

"Harry and I started one morning, intending to be back by nightfall. Little Lizzy clung to me and besought me 'not to taw long.' But on our way back we got bewildered in a dense scrub, and it was far in the night before we got clear of it.

"Don't believe them, sir, that laugh at forebodings of evil. I was as sure there was something wrong as I was of my existence. Yes, and there *was* something wrong. When we got back, Peggy was surrounded by the few women of the place, quite insensible. Harry turned sick, and was going to fall. He could only say to me as I held him up, 'Ask, ask.'

"What is all this, Mrs. Murphy?" I asked.

"Och, Tom dear, poor little Lizzy. The Lord be good to me; and she sobbed in genuine sorrow.

"I was trembling all over, and felt very giddy, but I managed to gasp out:

"Will no one here, in God's name, tell us what has happened?"

"She's lost, Tom. Every one's hunting for her everywhere. She's lost since sundown."

"Harry rose up as cool as man could be, assisted the women to restore his wife to her senses, and then, after fearful explosions of grief, we learned that Peggy had gone down to the creek for water, leaving Lizzie asleep in the marquee. The creek was some distance off, and as she did not feel well, she sat down many times to rest. When she got back, Lizzy was gone."

Here My Orderly (No. 1) appeared to have swallowed about a dozen mosquitoes, and somehow my Other Orderlies began to complain what an infernal nuisance "them beasts of horse mosquitoes were."

"Cheer up, my girl," says Harry; "all's not lost that's in danger. Tom and I must go and see about this?"

"We went outside, and, before we mounted our horses, Tom came up to me and said:

"Let me feel your hand, Tom. Right, you are all there, I see. I want to say one word to you, Tom. I am a very wicked man."

"Are you a lunatic, Harry?" says I. "Has this turned your brain after all?"

"No, Tom," he said, "I am a villain in allowing certain thoughts to cross my mind."

"What do you mean?" I said.

"This," says he: "I believe Lizzy has been taken away, and is perhaps murdered."

"Be a man, Harry," I answers. "Do you suspect any one?"

"He did not answer, but mounted his horse, and we rode away. That long night through we rode about 'cooeing,' and many a narrow escape we had from tumbling down the deep holes. We met others, too, as busy as we were, on the same errand. But we all returned without success.

"That evening, as we sat in the marquee taking some refreshment, I said to Harry:

"You recollect what you said to me last night?"

"Says he, 'And are you not of my mind?'"

"Listen to me, Tom," I said. "Jimmy is now at Rooke's station, about thirty miles off. He's the best tracker in the colonies. Bring him into the marquee, and whoever took the child away, Jimmy will track better than a blood-hound."

"No good, Tom," says he. "Look at the crowds of people that have been here since; every track of last night is gone."

"Never mind," I answers. "Jimmy must be got. It's our only chance."

"Harry rode over, and got the black fellow. He could speak English very well, and understood in an instant what he had to do. It was very curious to see how he commenced his work. He spent at least an hour about the bunk that Lizzy had been sleeping on. Then he got up and led the way slowly towards a scrub not more than two hundred yards off. We entered it; he went on until he came to a spot where he stopped, as though uncertain. After some time, he went out of the scrub at right angles to our road into it, and led the way right to a deep-sunk hole that had been deserted some weeks before.

"I have often thought that Harry and I were in a kind of stupor all this time (although we saw and noted everything that was done), for it seems to me now that only a moment passed until I saw men letting the black fellow down by a rope, saw him come up again with something that had golden hair hanging on his arm, heard my poor Harry utter the most awful scream of mortal agony that ever rang through my ears, and after that I didn't hear any more."

(Here the mosquitoes, confound them, were very hard at work.)

"Well, sir, there was an inquest—Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.

"The question was, who was the murderer? Harry and I had no doubt about it, and several were of our opinion. The suspected man had left the gully, it appeared, early on the day of the murder, although one woman said she saw him coming back long after the others had seen him go. However, there was no shadow of law-evidence against him, and we could do nothing. Rewards were offered, detectives sent up—all to

no purpose. Peggy did not recover her senses for a long time, and she never was told the worst part of the case. Harry seemed to live only for the purpose of discovering his child's destroyer. We took Peggy down to the sea-coast, got her the best medical advice, and, after we saw that she was mending, we determined to leave her with the kind, good people we lodged with, and to go to visit new diggings we had just heard of.

"And now, sir, I am going to tell you one of them things you read about in novels; but I often say that novels is foolish things compared with real life. The evening before we were to start, Peggy, with her poor weak hands, was rummaging among her packages for some things to give to Harry for his journey. Suddenly she began to cry and sob so bitterly that Harry ran over to her, and says:

"What is the matter with you, my poor darling?"

"But Harry began to sob himself, for his wife had just taken out by mistake the little frock that the blessed child had been murdered in. He threw it down on the table to support his wife, and I heard something like metal strike the candlestick. What made me pay attention to it I cannot tell, but there, half hid by the little waist-belt, was something round and shining.

"Harry," says I, "come here for a moment. Do you recognise this?"

"Of course he did; so did I. It was the top of Cornish's tobacco-pipe, of a style that no one could ever fail to notice.

"Tom," says Harry, as white as a sheet, "where did you get this?"

"It must have got entangled in the waist-belt," I said, in a whisper, "when he was carrying her, and got hidden between the belt and the frock. You throwing it down made it come half out."

"What will you do with it?" I said again. "Hand it to the police, of course?"

"No fear," Harry answers. "The lawyers would be safe to get him off. They would make it out that the child found it, or that the guilty party put it there on purpose to divert attention from him, and many other things of the kind. No, Tom; I know two policemen who will find him." He looked very hard into my face as he said this.

"I think I know them, too," I said. "When will they set out?"

"To-morrow morning, Tom, and no mistake."

"The next morning the two policemen set out. One of them was called—O yes, he was called Griffin, and the other—call him Hobbs if you like. It did not take such experienced bush-constables long to find out that Cornish was living, under another name, on the station of a Mr. Courtenay, as stockman. They steered in that direction, and in a day or two reached the station.

"They asked about a stockman called Walsh. He had left that very day. Would Mr.

Courtenay be kind enough to describe him? With pleasure; a tall, lank man, with large black eyebrows, and bad expression of face. He had taken the road towards Bendigo.

"Towards Bendigo! The two constables looked at each other, and a curious look was exchanged between them. They put their horses to their mettle that day, but they did not overtake their man; still they heard on the way that he was ahead. They tied their weary horses up that night and pulled up grass for them, not to lose time in the morning. At a very early hour they were on the road again, and about ten o'clock they saw a traveller before them, and they were sure he was their man. They slackened their speed that they might overtake him gradually, and at a convenient spot. They managed it so well, that at the same moment one was on each side of him on a lonely part of the road. He looked into the faces of both, and saw his fate there. He was about to make a desperate rush for it, when Griffin seized his bridle, and Hobbs clapped a revolver to his head.

"Come quietly with us at once, or you are a dead man."

"The wretch let his hands drop helplessly down while the constables led him off the road into the bush. When there, Griffin says to him:

"Do you know this?" holding up the top of the pipe. The other muttered something.

"This was found, do you hear, in the frock of the child you murdered, and worse than murdered. Move on, and the first sound or movement you make, you are a corpse."

"They went on. They were about twenty miles from Bendigo, but they kept quite in the bush, to avoid observation and make a short cut. They had reached the place of our old encampment long before nightfall, but they stayed in the scrub until long after the sun went down. They kept their prisoner sitting on the ground in front of them. Several times he had tried to ask them questions, but Griffin, in a terrible voice, told him to be silent.

"As soon as it became deep dusk, Griffin got up, put a large piece of wood in their prisoner's mouth, and secured it by binding his own handkerchief over his mouth and round his head. He then bound his arms and hands very tightly with two saddle-straps, and led him along, pistol in hand. The fatal hole was soon found. The wretch made one convulsive spring backwards, and the noises that he made in attempting to scream were unearthly. But there was no escape. Griffin, with superhuman force, plunged him into the hole, and they listened with grim pleasure to the splash he made in the water at the bottom."

"Gracious Heavens!" I exclaimed; "you don't mean to tell me that you—that they deliberately murdered a man in that way?"

"I only tell you what occurred, sir," replied My Orderly (No. 1); "but I don't call it murder. They threw Cornish's (alias Walsh) saddle and bridle into the hole, and turned his horse loose. You may depend upon it, sir, there are few places that could make such revelations, if

they could speak, as the deep old holes of Bendigo."

"My good friend," I began, "I am afraid that——" But just then the loud and wild corrobberie of black fellows was heard about two hundred yards off.

"Put fresh caps on your revolvers, men; they may come down upon us. Any one who is awake and hears them coming will rouse the others."

And so, with a brief prayer to Heaven for those who were far distant, and for protection throughout the night, I wrapped myself in my blanket and lay down beside my boy-son (whom I am training to this life of adventure); nor was it long before the wild corrobberie chant, droning in my drowsy ear, grew fainter still, and then was lost.

THE VIGIL.

THE moon has risen solemnly
O'er yonder distant height,
No murky clouds have crossed her path,
Dimming her silver light.
Pure, peaceful, holy, gentle, calm,
She guards the earth to-night.

Silent and still the cedars spread
Their branches rough and torn,
And dark and far their shadows fling
Across the shaven lawn,
Where, tended by a mother's love,
There rests a sleeping fawn.

Before another sun has set,
Beneath the cloister's shade,
For ever will the oath be sworn,
The fatal word be said,
And by the altar's holy shrine
The sacred promise made.

No more upon these lips of mine
Shall lover's kiss be pressed:
No more held fast within his arms
And folded to his breast,
Shall my heart find a hiding-place
To nestle down and rest.

No one more dear than all beside
To be my stay through life;
No strong firm arm and steady hand
To help me in the strife;
No earnest looks of trust and love,
No tender name of wife!

And I must check the thought as sin,
Which bade my heart rejoice
Whene'er I heard, like some sweet chord,
The music of his voice,
And knew that he was near me then,
My own, my love, my choice!

No tiny hands will stroke my cheek,
And round my neck entwine,
Nor baby smiles, nor baby lips,
Meet tenderly with mine,
And be beyond expression dear,
Because a child of thine!

They tell me that rich gifts will come
Upon me from above,
When through the cloister, dim and still,
With quiet steps I move,
If I will strive to check and kill
All thought of earthly love.

They tell me that the Highest One
 Will fill me with His grace,
 And cause about my path to shine
 The brightness of His face,
 And give me, though so stained with sin,
 In Heaven a dwelling-place.

But did He mean that human hearts
 Should feel such bitter pain,
 That human love should spring and grow,
 And yet be all in vain;
 Or worse, by hard and cruel blow,
 Be smitten down and slain?

Hush! sinful thoughts and murmuring words!
 Peace! restless soul, be still!
 Some wise and holy end is wrought
 From every grief and ill,
 And sorrow is an Angel sent
 To do God's blessed will.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF FAUNTLEROY.

IN one point, a cynic once said, we in these latter days have materially gone back in civilisation; we now only transport bankers who turn thieves. Formerly we used to hang them.

Any day towards the close of the London season of 1821, persons turning into Berners-street out of the din and jostle of Oxford-street, would have seen on the door of Number Six an oblong brass plate, and engraved upon it, in free cursive letters,

MARSH, STACEY, FAUNTLEROY, AND GRAHAM,
 names great on 'Change, potent in the Bank parlour, and influential in Lombard-street.

A rapid glance through the thin veil of a dark wire blind, bordered with white, would have shown well-dressed, taciturn young men busy at ledgers, ruffling silvery bundles of bank-notes, or shovelling sovereigns in golden showers from drawer to counter, from counter to drawer. Had a glass door at the back of the room at that moment opened, it might have disclosed a thin-faced, elderly man, with neat powdered hair, and a dress of black, cut in the most perfect—but quiet—fashion. It might have been that the very moment the door opened, that grave intensely respectable and appreciated person, that delight of society, had just, with a sigh, completed the writing of a certain memorable document, and enclosed it in a tin box, sighing as he turned the key quickly and suspiciously in the lock: then carefully depositing it in a desk, locked the desk with another key which hung among his costly bunch of watch-seals.

Persons living in that street, struggling in small businesses and just turning their money, must have often looked up at the sumptuous apartments on the first floor at Number Six, and have envied that pale grave man, whose anxious face they could sometimes see looking through the windows. Hackney-coachmen on the rank in Berners-street, as they screwed down the tobacco in their oily pipes, and discussed the world over the tops of their coaches, must have often pointed with the butt-end of

their whips surreptitiously to the glittering windows at Number Six, when Mr. Fauntleroy was conspicuously "at home." "Rich as Creases!" may have been said, more than once, on such occasions.

Punctual as the Horse Guards' clock, Mr. Fauntleroy came in from his Brighton villa, turned the corner from Regent-circus, and solemnly pushed open the bank doors, hushing at once all chatter of clerks, their snatches of songs, and their theatrical and sporting reminiscences.

To have impugned that house upon 'Change would have been to incur the penalty of being pumped on, and afterwards of being beaten dry with a horsewhip; an action for libel, with swinging damages, would have then, without doubt, taken all the remainder of your breath out of you, and embittered the rest of your life with the disgrace of bankruptcy. The British Constitution was not more stable than Fauntleroy's house; Magna Charta not more venerated.

Yet, remarkable to state, on the afternoon of that bright and pleasant autumn day—September 10th—Samuel Plank, a hard-faced police-officer from Marlborough-street, suddenly entered the neat bank parlour, laid his large brawny hands on Mr. Fauntleroy's shoulder, and apprehended him, on a charge of forging powers of attorney, by which he had disposed of three hundred and sixty thousand pounds' worth of other people's Bank of England stock. The old clerks almost fainted; the young clerks derided the charge in a tremulous way; the partners sympathised; stray persons in the bank on business were horrified, and almost thought the end of the world had come. On those thin, white, perhaps rather mischievous hands the grim bright steel handcuffs, as bracelets, must have looked sadly unfitting. It was remarkable, however, that considering the worthy and most respectable banker's perfect and palpable innocence, Mr. Fauntleroy seemed to expect the unpleasant visit, and locked the desk at which he sat with considerable care just as the police-officer entered the sacred room. The key was taken from the banker's watch-chain at the Marlborough-street office, and was found to lead to most important discoveries, affecting, indeed, half the commercial interest of London.

A palsy of horror and fear seized the tenants of bank parlours the next morning, when, throwing carelessly open the wet and flowing sheet of the Times, their eyes fell on a paragraph in large type, headed in thrilling capitals:

"Arrest of Mr. FAUNTLEROY, the eminent banker, on a charge of FORGERY!!!"

What pallor must have fallen on respectable grave faces! How many gold spectacles must have been taken off as if to get more air! What stimulants of snuff must have been inhaled! How many grey heads must have met with ominous looks over ledgers!

In the City such catastrophes as this produce a horrible feeling of alarm, suspicion, and dis-

trust. Every bank seems a whited sepulchre. It is as if Lombard-street pavement had suddenly given way, like ice, and a great volcano of uncontrollable fire had come spouting up ten times as high as the Monument. Such convulsions in commerce are what great disappointments are in life; they make men cynics in a moment; they uproot hope, and destroy our trust in human nature. If Fides be false, if Achates is dishonest, who, we think, can be honest, who can be true? No hypocrite is ever exposed without making half a dozen men irreligious for life. No banker is dishonest without turning half a dozen commercial men into misanthropes, who henceforward raise their rate of interest and refuse loans even to their own mothers.

Before Mr. Fauntleroy's trial took place, endless ledgers had been conned, bank-books totted up, tin boxes ransacked, and stupendous discoveries made. The court was full of bankers, merchants, literary men, and west-end men, who had either been robbed by Fauntleroy, or had shared his hospitality at his pleasant dinner-parties. The prisoner, with his powdered hair and dress immaculate as ever, stood pale, nervous, and humble at the bar. Fauntleroy had really embezzled about four hundred thousand pounds, but the Bank of England prosecuted for only one hundred and seventy thousand pounds which he had obtained by forged powers of attorney in the years 1814, 1815.

The grand jury of the city of London found true bills against Mr. Fauntleroy on several charges of forgery, and the trial was appointed to take place on October 30, 1824. The sheriffs determined to obviate the inconveniences of a crowded court by preventing any persons entering it as mere spectators who were not provided with tickets signed by themselves. Nevertheless, the galleries, which were claimed as private property under the control of particular officers of the corporation, were farmed out with great zeal at a guinea a seat.

Long before eight o'clock a throng began to assemble at the Old Bailey doors, and a tremendous crush was expected; but, as often happens in these cases, so many people feared the crowd, that, after all, no very great crowd came. The price of the gallery seats had deterred the public, and there were not more than twenty persons in them.

Mr. ex-Sheriff Parkins made himself rather conspicuous by his remarkable eagerness for the commencement of the trial, and his great apprehension lest some unforeseen circumstance should produce delay.

At ten o'clock, Mr. Justice Park and Mr. Baron Garrow entered the court, accompanied by the Lord Mayor. The prisoner was dressed in a full suit of black, and his grey hair was, as usual, powdered. His previous firmness seemed to desert him now when placed at the bar. His step was tremulous, his face pale and thinner than on his first examination at Marlborough-street. He never raised his head, even for a

moment, but placed his hands for support on the front of the dock, and stood in the most dejected way while the Deputy-Clerk of the Arraignment repeated the seven different indictments for forgery. The reading of these occupied twenty minutes.

The first indictment charged Henry Fauntleroy (no respect now to the great rich man) with forging a deed with intent to defraud Frances Young of five thousand pounds stock, and also with forging a power of attorney with intent to defraud the Bank of England.

The Attorney-General then, gathering up his heap of notes, and tossing his silk gown higher over his shoulders, set to work to fit the noose securely and legally round the neck of the unhappy banker. Fauntleroy's father, he stated, had been a partner in the bank from its very first establishment, and continued so till his death in 1807, at which period the prisoner became a partner, and soon rose to be the most active and working member of the firm. In 1815, Frances Young, of Chichester, a customer of the house, lodged in the hands of the firm a power of attorney to receive the dividends on five thousand four hundred and fifty pounds Three per Cent Consols. These dividends were regularly received; but soon afterwards another power of attorney was presented to the bank, authorising the prisoner to sell that stock, and he sold it. It was afterwards found that he had forged the name of Frances Young, and the names of the two attesting witnesses. Since the discovery, a paper of singular importance had been found proving this. (What this paper was it will be better for us to state further on.)

James Tyson, the first witness called, said: I have been clerk in the bank ever since 1807, the very year the prisoner was taken into the house. In 1815, the partners were Sir James Tibbald, Bart., William Marsh, Henry Fauntleroy, George Edward Graham, and Josias Henry Stacey. Sir James died in 1819 or 1820, and Mr. Fauntleroy became then the active partner. The name of James Tyson attached to the instrument produced is not in my handwriting. I swear that I did not write it. I never saw Miss Frances Young sign a deed. I never, indeed, saw her in my life till I saw her at the office at Marlborough-street, after Mr. Fauntleroy's apprehension. The description of the witnesses, "clerks to Messrs. Marsh, Tibbald, and Co., bankers, Berners-street, is, I think, in Mr. Fauntleroy's writing. I have been in the habit of seeing him write weekly, daily, hourly. Having such knowledge of his handwriting, I say that I have no doubt that the words of the description are in his writing."

John Browning, junior, examined by Mr. Law, deposed: I have been for twenty-four years a clerk in the Three per Cent Consols office. I was subsidiary witness to the power of attorney produced. I saw Mr. Fauntleroy attach this signature in the sixth division of our office. I have with me here, the bank ledger, which shows that, on the day named, Miss Frances Young

had five thousand four hundred and fifty pounds Three per Cent Consolidated Annuities standing in her name. The transfer-book I here produce shows that on June 1, 1815, five thousand pounds were transferred from the name of Miss F. Young to that of William Flower, of the Stock Exchange. The signature subscribed to that transfer, "R. Fauntleroy, attorney," was written by Mr. Fauntleroy in my presence. I know the prisoner's handwriting.

Mr. Robert Best, secretary to the Bank of England, examined by Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet: I have with me the minute-book of the directors. There is a minute, dated 21st of October, 1824: "Ordered that Three per Cent Consols should be purchased and entered in the name of Miss Frances Young." There was a preamble—

Mr. Gurney, the prisoner's counsel, struggling against the stream, objected to the preamble being read. Witness was not present when the resolution was agreed to. It really was not evidence.

Mr. Justice Park reserved the question, but said that the order was contained in the books of the Bank of England, and those books had always been received as evidence ever since he had been in the profession.

Mr. Best continued: The original minute was written by the Governor of the Bank, who handed it to the secretary to read, and to be confirmed by the Court of Directors, after which it was entered in the minute-book.

Mr. Benjamin Tite, stockbroker to the Bank of England, then proved the purchase of five thousand pounds consols, and the transfer of the sum to the name of Miss F. Young. (This was the sum to replace the money fraudulently taken by Fauntleroy.)

The jury not understanding the tendency of all this evidence, Mr. Justice Park, in his bland way, explained that it was necessary to make Miss Young a competent witness, and that it was required to prove that she had no interest either in invalidating or affirming the genuineness of the power of attorney. The Bank had since replaced the stock, and released her from all claims.

Mr. Gurney objected to Miss Frances Young being called. She had not received her dividends since 1805. The proving the forgery entitled her to dividends of considerable value; she was, therefore, an interested and incompetent witness.

The Attorney-General removed this objection by proving Miss Young's signature to a deed releasing the Bank of England from all claims touching the dividends.

Miss Young proved that her signature to the power was a forgery. "I never authorised the prisoner, nor any other person, to sell out five thousand pounds stock for me. I was never in London either in May or June in 1815. I was all that time in Chichester."

James Tyson recalled: Mr. Marsh generally received the bulk of the dividends at the Bank, as he was the senior partner of the firm. Before the dividends are received, it is usual for

bankers to make out a list of the sums they have to receive for their customers. That list was generally made out in our house by Mr. Fauntleroy. (A list was here put into the hands of the witness.) That is a list of the dividends to be received upon consols in July, 1824. The endorsement upon it, "Three per Cent Consols, July, 1824, Marsh, Stacey, and Co.," is in the handwriting of the prisoner. The paper contains a long list of names, and of sums opposite to them. The list is alphabetical. The first column is in red. The red figures are made by the bank clerks. The two other columns, the one of the names and the other of sums, are in the handwriting of Mr. Fauntleroy. I see the name of Frances Young in the list. Five hundred and fifty pounds is placed opposite her name as the sum upon which the dividends are to be received. When the dividend warrants had been received by Mr. Marsh at the Bank of England, he brought them home and gave them to Mr. Fauntleroy. Mr. Fauntleroy made out an account of part of the sums so received. The rest were made out by the clerk. I have the cash-book of July, 1824, with me, and I see the following entry among those made by the prisoner: "Miss Frances Young, 5550*l.* = 83-5. (The witness then produced various ledgers belonging to the house of Marsh and Co., and read entries in them, from which it appeared that from July, 1823, the dividends credited to Miss F. Young were on five thousand five hundred and fifty pounds, and that previously to that time they were on five thousand four hundred and fifty pounds. The entries in the day-book were traced back to 1815, and were invariably found to be in the prisoner's handwriting. The same was the case in the cash-books.) On the 1st June the sum of two thousand nine hundred and fifty-three pounds two shillings and sixpence is entered to the credit of H. F. That entry is in the handwriting of Watson, one of the clerks. I have turned to the private ledger of the different partners, and have looked to the dates of June 1st and June 6th. There is the following entry in one line:—"June 6th, Ryan, 40*l.*; June 1st, cash 2953*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*: 2993*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*" The words, "June 6th, Ryan, 40*l.*," are in the handwriting of Mr. Graham. The remainder is in the handwriting of the prisoner at the bar. It stands short upon the line, and there appears to have been an erasure there. The whole of the line stands to the credit of "H. F."

Cross-examined by Mr. Gurney: The whole of the sums placed there to the credit of the prisoner amount to thirty thousand pounds. I do not know whether those sums did or did not find their way into the funds of the house. That rests with the partners themselves. I do not know that they were drawn out on Mr. Fauntleroy's own private account. Messrs. Martin and Co. were our City bankers, and often received money on our account, and paid it over to us. It is impossible for me to say whether the money about which I am questioned was or was not paid into the banking-

house. Mr. Stacey could answer that question; a clerk cannot. It was usual to make entries in the books for large sums to the initials of the partners. They were placed sometimes to stock transactions, and sometimes to exchequer transactions.

Mr. Plank, a police-officer, deposed to finding two boxes at Mr. Fauntleroy's, one of them had the prisoner's name upon it. Both were opened with the keys found in Mr. Fauntleroy's desk. They were taken away in a coach by Mr. Freshfield, the solicitor to the Bank.

Mr. Freshfield proved that in the box with the name he found principally deeds and probates of wills, and in that with no name (therefore more private) a variety of memoranda, diaries, the sale note of Miss F. Young's stock, and also the extraordinary document already referred to by the Attorney-General.

James Tyson, again recalled, proved the fatal document to be in the prisoner's handwriting. When there was a sale of stock effected for a customer of the house, it was usual to file the sold note, and one of the partners then entered it in a book kept for the purpose.

James Kirby, another clerk of Fauntleroy's house, deposed that no such entry had been made as was usual in the fair course of business.

Crushing as this evidence was, the document so often referred to from the tin box had *death* written all over it. It was sufficient to have hung twenty bankers.

It was, in fact, a confession, in the prisoner's own handwriting, and rendered further evidence almost unnecessary. It contained the following items: De la Place, eleven thousand one hundred and fifty pounds Three per Cent Consols; E. W. Young, five thousand pounds Consols; General Young, six thousand pounds Consols; Frances Young, five thousand pounds Consols; H. Kelley, six thousand pounds Consols; Lady Nelson, eleven thousand one hundred and ninety-five pounds Consols; Earl of Ossory, seven thousand pounds Four per Cents; W. Bowen, nine thousand four hundred pounds Four per Cents; Parkins, four thousand pounds Consols. Sums were also placed to the names of Mrs. Pelham, Lady Aboyne, W. R. and H. Fauntleroy, and Elizabeth Fauntleroy. The Attorney-General observed that the sum total, one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, appeared at the foot of this list in the prisoner's handwriting. The statement was followed by this declaration: "In order to keep up the credit of our house, I have forged powers of attorney for the above sums and parties, and sold out to the amount here stated, and without the knowledge of my partners. I kept up the payment of the dividends, but made no entries of such payments in our books. *The Bank began first to refuse to discount our acceptances, and to destroy the credit of our house; the Bank shall smart for it.*"

The prisoner, on being asked what he had to say in his defence, read a paper stating that, on his joining the firm in 1807, he found the concern deeply involved in consequence of

building speculations. The house remained in embarrassment until 1810, and then experienced an overwhelming loss from the failure of Brickwood and Co., for which concern it had accepted and discounted bills to the amount of one hundred and seventy thousand pounds. In 1814, 1815, 1816, the firm was called upon, in consequence of speculations in building, to produce one hundred thousand pounds. In 1819 the most responsible of the partners died, and the embarrassments of the house were again increased by being called upon to refund his capital. During all this time the house was without resources, except those for which he was now responsible. He had received no relief from his partners. He kept two establishments on a very moderate scale. *He had never embezzled one shilling.*

Having finished reading the paper, Fauntleroy sat down and wept with much agitation.

Never had there been such witnesses to character. Sir Charles Forbes and fifteen other witnesses, who had known Mr. Fauntleroy for from ten to twenty years each, attested their high opinion of the prisoner's honour, integrity, and goodness of disposition. They were all his sincere friends, and were all in the same tune. No doubt of his honour and integrity had ever crossed their minds. They all revealed the serene mountain peak of respectability from which the banker had fallen headlong. "Kind, honourable," said one. "Just, fair, and kind-hearted," cried another. "A most benevolent man, with a stainless character for integrity," declared a third.

There is no moment in a trial which involves death, so solemn as the moment when the jury rise and retire to consider their verdict. Even the barristers' worn faces glow with excitement. The judge has an air of grave abstraction, and seems pondering over the few still unsolvable mysteries of the case. A cold dew has broken out on the forehead of the prisoner, and he clutches at the dock as if that hold only retained him in life. In that short interval of time there is crowded upon him the agony of years. The horrors of death have already come. There is a dead silence. Then a distant sound of feet; it grows nearer, the crowd surge back. The jury is returning. They enter flushed and grave. The judge gives them one searching look, and the foreman rises to answer the solemn question to be asked him. The prisoner's whole soul is absorbed in the answer. In Fauntleroy's case the jury retired for twenty minutes. The prisoner seemed deeply agitated during their absence, and rose up when the mob poured in announcing their return.

The verdict was, "Guilty of uttering the forged instrument knowing it to be forged."

Judge Park, after bending down and exchanging a few remarks with the counsel in a low voice, suddenly, and with extreme abruptness, raised his head and exclaimed:

"Henry Fauntleroy!"

The prisoner started, and rose as if in expectation that sentence was about to be pro-

nounced on him. The learned judge proceeded: "Henry Fauntleroy, the Attorney-General does not feel it necessary, in the discharge of his duty, to proceed further with the other indictments which have been preferred against you. It is no part of my painful duty to pronounce the awful sentence of the law, which will follow the verdict which has just been recorded. That unpleasant task will devolve on the learned Recorder at the termination of the sessions; but it is a part of my duty as a Christian magistrate to implore you now that you bethink yourself seriously of your latter end." A convulsive sob from the wretched prisoner was audible through the court. When the judge had concluded, Fauntleroy was quite overpowered, being barely able to raise his hands as if in the attitude of prayer, which was the only answer he was capable of making. He was then removed from the bar, supported on the arms of Mr. Wontner and one of his friends, to the prison.

There remains a certain mystery still shrouding the great Fauntleroy swindle. It is impossible to conjecture for what purpose the dishonest banker preserved in a private box so careful and suicidal a statement of his own misdoings. It might have been that he was contemplating immediate flight even at the very moment of his arrest, and wished to leave behind him a clear and logical schedule that might explain matters to, and absolve, his partners. It might be that Fauntleroy (with that strange confusion of feeling and aberration of judgment that raises some thieves almost to the dignity of monomaniacs) wished to leave ample and clear testimony of the revenge his mistaken honour had taken on the Bank of England for having refused credit to his firm.

Our own hypothesis is, however, a harsher one. It is a kindly trait in human nature, a proof of its indelible goodness (and also its inexhaustible gullibility, sneers the cynic), that people are generally disposed to believe the last confessions of great criminals. The man whose blackened and corrupted soul has planned the most treacherous and cruel crimes is usually supposed to be so cleansed and purified by the sight of twelve British jurymen and a wig of flowing horsehair, that his declarations are heard with all the confidence with which we listen to the lisplings of innocence and infancy. No motive is suspected, no mental distortion allowed for. We yield ourselves ready believers to a dark tissue of subtle and ingenious falsehoods invented by the man who is, as he knows, hotly hunted by the hangman, and on the very brink of the false floor from which the well-greased bolt is already receding.

The man who has once plunged into the slough of crime has long lived on lies. They have become the very breath of his life, his food, his implements, the scaffolding with which he builds, the pitfall he sets for his victims, his mask, his ambush, and his armour; they have grown dear to him as his cruel knife and his still smoking pistol. It is not a few hours in a dark stone cell; it is not even twelve jurymen and an

entangled wig that will scare him from their use. He has become a great devilish destructive principle at war with the principles of truth and goodness, and lies are but the twinings and doublings that he makes in his desperate and panting struggle to escape the slip knot. He has petrified himself into an incarnate lie. As for truth, it chokes him, and is snatched from him before he can utter it.

We believe that Fauntleroy gambled, and lived at Brighton in foolish splendour, under the shadow of the fantastic palace of George the Fourth. The great capitalist, the honourable benevolent kind-hearted banker, had not moral courage enough to face the world, in honest brave poverty. He went on living as he had lived. He silently stole thousands after thousands, buoyed up by the secret excuse of an absurd and illogical revenge, until he got deeper and deeper in the slimy morass of fraud. Theft had to back up theft. He could not stop himself. He must go on now. Restitution became hopeless.

In the glitter of a thousand wax-lights, in his soft-lined carriage on the Steyne, in the Park, in Bond-street, the grave man in black moved and passed, the model of bankers, the very rose of Lombard-street. When he got alone and at night, he became the agonised, timid, crushed, miserable, broken-hearted man, trembling at every door that opened, shuddering at every whisper on the stairs, startled at each jarring window, palsied every morning he opened the paper and read another bank failure, another scene on the Newgate scaffold, — every time the fatal dividend-day came round, lest his victims, from a moment's delay, should scent out the long series of cruel and treacherous theft. Riches, show, splendour, Brighton villas, money-bags, diamonds, are indeed pitiful and contemptible when we look at nine years passed in this torture.

The gay and pleasant time had passed; the days of splendour, ostentation, arrogance, and luxury in the club-rooms or the Steyne, in the Berners-street parlour, at the great dinner-parties (mentioned by Hazlitt), had gone by. Those few simple words, written in a bold clear business-like hand, had been as the sowing of dragons' teeth; they had evoked police-officers, jurymen, judges, and last of all the hangman. The slow dawning day of terrible retribution had at last come. The honourable and benevolent banker was now to stand forth over Newgate door, before a hundred thousand cruel, eager, brutal, pitiless faces, looming white through the fog of a dull, dismal, cold, wet November morning.

Hardly since the Perreaus, the wine-merchants, who were hung in 1776, or since Dr. Dodd, the popular preacher, paid the penalty at Tyburn, for forgery, in 1777, had the contemplated execution of a gentleman moved more pity, or excited such deep and universal interest. One does not see a great London banker hung every day. The sight drew together half the City. At daybreak, a vast crowd began to roll on towards the great gloomy blind stone house on the hill, to scan its hard repulsive

profile against the unpropitious and sunless sky, and to gape up at the coffin-like door, emblazoned with the murderer's escutcheon of iron fetters. The sordid and greasy thousands not only extended in a close-packed mass from Ludgate-hill to the entrance of the then loathsome and penned-up Smithfield, but surged away all down Skinner-street and along Newgate-street, around that black mountain range of stone which is called Saint Paul's, far indeed beyond any point where any line of perspective or alley could afford the faintest glimpse of the scaffold.

The sight was evidently considered so grand, that it was something to be even half a mile away from it. There was a ground-swell of swearing and howling, and a host of ruffians half maddened by not being able to see the gentleman banker "turned off." A cruel envy and hatred, and a still more horrible heartlessness, filled the minds of those wretches. Every window and house-roof near Newgate was crowded with amateurs of executions, well-bred men whose manners had furnished subjects for shilling books on etiquette. Unsexed women shouted and sang below the windows let out at such profitable sums. Men, drinking to keep out the cold, declared the crowd was equal to that which had witnessed Thistlewood and his gang swung out of the world for their crimes.

At a quarter before eight, the sheriffs had entered the prisoner's room. Fauntleroy (it is a mockery to say Mr. now) lifted his eyes sadly, and, seeing them, bowed, but said nothing. The instincts of the gentleman were still there. Besides the ordinary of Newgate—the Rev. Mr. Cotton (whose name thieves used to pun on)—Mr. Baker was with the prisoner, and the Rev. Mr. Springett had borne with him the agony of the previous night's bitter sorrow and repentance.

Fauntleroy, still true to the traditions of respectability, was dressed in a black coat and trousers, with silk stockings and evening dress shoes. He was perfectly composed. His face showed no change since the trial. His eyes were closed. Even this hour was perhaps preferable to the long torture of those nine years of self-accusation.

The moment came. The silent but unmistakable gesture called him. There was no delay. Nothing could stop those preparations but the sudden death of one man. The sheriffs moved forward with serious faces. The ordinary passed on, after set form. No one required teaching as to his place in the ghastly procession. Mr. Baker and Mr. Springett, true friends even now, took each an arm of Fauntleroy, and followed the sheriffs and Mr. Cotton. The wretched man never turned his head right or left till he reached the foot of the steps leading to the scaffold—no longer the velvet-carpeted stairs, but rough deal planks fresh from the saw. He passed up to the scaffold, where the hard grim man stood to welcome him and arrange him for death.

The moment he appeared, a strange thrill went through thousands of hearts. The black dim

mob turned white—every hat went off in the twinkling of an eye. In less than two minutes the body of Fauntleroy, the banker, swayed in the murky November air.

Fauntleroy's doom was so thoroughly recognised as well merited, that although, in 1832, every other kind of forger was exempted by law from the gallows, the hands of the hangman still hovered over the forger of wills and of powers of attorney to transfer stock. Meanwhile, only two other executions for forgery took place:—Joseph Hunton, a Quaker linendraper, having forged and uttered several bills of exchange, was arrested in the cabin of the ship in which he had tried to escape to America; and although the jury recommended him strongly to mercy, he was hung in December, 1828. The last execution for forgery was that of Thomas Maynard, in the following year, for forging a custom-house warrant. In 1837 the capital punishment for that crime was abolished.

A ghastly anecdote, illustrative of the deep sincerity of dinner-friendships, and the profound attachment whereof boon companions are capable, long survived this miserable man, and was, within these twenty years, told for truth by one of his generation. His elegant dinners had been particularly renowned for some remarkable and unmatchable Curaçoa. He had been frequently asked at his own table of whom he bought it, but always kept the secret. When he was ordered for execution, three friends, bound to him by the remembrance of many feasts and many glasses of this famous liqueur, had a parting interview with him in his Condemned Cell. They had discharged themselves of such edifying remarks as they had brought with them, and had taken their final leave of him and were about to retire, when the most impressive of the three stepped back, and said, "Fauntleroy, you stand on the verge of the tomb, and Eternity awaits you. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can take nothing out. At so supreme a moment, have you any objection to say how, and of whom, you procured that Curaçoa?"

FRENCH TREATMENT OF THE DROWNED.

Nor a cloud in the blue sky, with the exception of a few small white streaks in the east, which denoted wind. The pier at Boulogne was crowded with loungers awaiting the arrival of the Folkestone boat, the double white funnel of which was just discernible on the verge of the horizon. The tide was coming in strong, the bathing-women were reaping a good harvest. Bathing at Boulogne is not unattended with danger. A boat belonging to the "Société de Naufrage" is always out during bathing-hours to warn back too adventurous swimmers, or to rescue persons in danger. The sea, on the day in question, was not stormy, but there was a swell; the green crisp waves, as they rolled in, curled before they broke and washed far up the sand.

Suddenly a shriek of agony startled the bathers and spectators. A young soldier had taken two horses into the sea; but, not being aware of the treacherous conformation of the ground and the power of the tide, he had ventured out too far, and man and horses suddenly sank in deep water. The boat at once pulled towards the spot. Like others, I hastily swam back to the machine, huddled on my clothes, and joined an anxious crowd just as the apparently lifeless body of the soldier was placed on a sort of stretcher on wheels, to be conveyed to that small yellow house familiar to every visitor at Boulogne, close to the Etablissement, called *Maison de Sauvetage*. Two sergents-de-ville prevented persons from entering. They were stopping me; but, on my presenting my card, the magic "open sesame," "journaliste," admitted me at once.

The doctor, two attendants, four private soldiers, and two or three officials, were in the place. It is a clean, airy, well-ventilated room, with four beds without curtains, a table, and some wooden chairs. On one of these beds the drowned man was placed. The four soldiers stripped him, the usual warm applications were resorted to, and rubbing of the body was vigorously performed. The man lay motionless, but life was not extinct. I stood at the head of the bed anxiously watching his eyes, which had a dull glazed look, but not the look of death.

The doctor now did what, in England, is seldom, if ever, done. He bled the patient in the left arm. The blood trickled, and, as the rubbing continued, the body was soon covered with blood, until it was sponged off by one of the attendants with warm water. Still there were no signs of motion. The doctor then forced the point of a small pair of bellows into the man's mouth, with a view to inflate the lungs; but without effect. He then drew a deep breath, and, placing his lips upon those of the dying man, endeavoured to blow warm life into him. This he repeated twice. All this took place in a very few moments.

The shadow of death suddenly passed over the man's face. I looked at the doctor, who with his thumb gently raised the upper eyelid and shook his head. I placed my hand on the chest of the dead soldier. It was cold clay. "He is dead?" I said, inquiringly. The doctor shrugged his shoulders, and put on his hat. We left the room together.

All that was done to save that poor fellow's life was well and promptly done. The question as to the propriety of bleeding in cases of drowning, is one which appertains to the realm of medical science. In Italy it is usually resorted to. Indeed, bleeding is there so usual, that every barber carries a lancet. If an Italian feel heavy in the head, he has a "sallazzo"—that is to say, he enters a barber's shop, bares his arm, and is bled. Cavour, according to some, was positively bled to death.

We have a receiving-house for the drowned, near the Serpentine. Here, the hot bath is used instead of bleeding, and many imprudent

skaters have been saved by that simple remedy. The matter may be worth the consideration of French authorities.

KÄTCHEN'S CAPRICES.

IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

It was a pretty picture, prettily set, that fair young face crowned with a lavish abundance of plaited tresses, looking forth from the quaintly carved window-frame! The owner of the face was Katerina Kester; and if you had lived in the village of Gossan, or within twenty English miles of it, I should not have needed to say more. You would have known her by reputation, if not by sight. But as it is, I had better explain who she was. Katerina's father, Josef Kester, kept an inn at the village of Gossan, in Upper Austria, close to the beautiful lake of Hallstadt. Not *the* inn where travellers stopped to dine and bait their horses, and whence they took boats for excursions on the lake; that was the Black Eagle. Josef's hostelry bore the sign of the Golden Lamb, and was of much humbler pretensions, being frequented only by the country-people, or occasionally receiving a footsore "Bursch," or German travelling workman, tramping through his probationary year of apprenticeship. The Black Eagle was flourishing, the Golden Lamb was decaying. The epithets black and golden might, indeed, have been reversed in their case; for the eagle had a glaring gilt beak and gilt talons, and a bright gilt crown on each of his two cruel-looking heads; while to believe that the poor lamb had ever been golden, was a strain on one's faith, so begrimed and dingy had he grown, with the blackening effects of time and weather. But the lamb, whether black or golden, possessed something of more beauty, ay, and some people thought of more value, than any article within the well-furnished rooms, guarded by the fierce, spruce, double-headed eagle. Katerina Kester, the landlord's daughter, was famed among the Gossaners, and for many a mile around Gossan, as being the prettiest girl in those parts. That might not be saying that she was really beautiful; for gloriously bountiful as Nature has been in making the surrounding scenery delightful to the eyes, she has not scattered female loveliness amongst its inhabitants with so lavish a hand. The women are in general tall and strong, but meagre, bony, brown-skinned, and betraying the effects of hard work and hard fare, by a premature appearance of age. Katerina, however, was as fresh and fair and rounded as a Hebe. Her mother had been a Saxon woman, from Tirna on the Elbe; and from her, Katerina inherited a blonde peach-like skin, large limpid light-blue eyes, and an enormous wealth of fair hair. This hair was splendid from its silky quality and great quantity; but it had not the warm richness of colour which painters love. It was not golden, but resembled rather the pale brightness of moonlight than the dazzling glow of sunshine; and when uncoiled it fell down straight on her knees in a silky mass,

unbroken by one ripple. So much for the picture; now for its frame. The Golden Lamb was an old house built chiefly of timber, and it had a great balcony running along two sides of it, whence a fine view up and down the lake was to be had. The window of Katerina's room was surrounded by carved woodwork, and garnished by a creeping plant, which thrust its delicate tresses even into the chamber when the frame filled with small glass panes was hooked back to admit the fresh air. On this particular Sunday morning the summer breeze came softly in at the window, heightening the rose on Kätchen's cheek, ruffling the bright smooth lake into dimples, and displaying the grace and lightness of the woodbine, that waved backwards and forwards with a rocking movement.

"Ah, what a fine day!" thought Katerina. "Dry and bright, but not too hot. Last night's shower will have laid the dust on the highway. How nice!" Katerina did not appreciate the full beauty of the grand scene that lay stretched out before her bedroom window. Lake and mountain were familiar to her sight, and, if I must tell the truth, our village belle was fonder of receiving than of giving admiration. It seemed to her very natural that people who had known her from a child should take unwearying pleasure in gazing on her pretty face, and extolling the length and softness of her hair. But if you had made any great demand on Katerina's powers of admiration on behalf of the lake and the mountains, she would have turned away with a pettish look, and would have told you that she had seen them every day—every day since she was born. The Kesters were Protestants, and attended service at the evangelical church in Hallstadt. Now, to go from Gossan to Hallstadt there is but one really practicable way, and that is to row thither in a boat on the lake; therefore it seems odd that Kätchen should have cared about the dust on the high road. But Kätchen had a lover who was the owner of a stout travelling-carriage and good team of horses, and who being, moreover, a steady driver, and a smart, honest young fellow, was often employed to convey travellers along the more unfrequented routes in the beautiful lake district—routes were railways were not, and diligences even few and far between. This lover, Fritz Rosenheim, was expected to-day at Gossan. He had passed through the village the week before on his way to Ischl, and was to return towards Salzburg on this bright Sunday morning. For this reason the state of the road was interesting to Kätchen. There was no regular engagement between her and Fritz Rosenheim. Old Josef Kester set himself very much against the idea of such a thing. He liked Fritz heartily, and was glad to see him, but—Fritz was poor. That was a misfortune from which the landlord of the Golden Lamb had suffered severely; and he was wont to say that he would never willingly expose his child to the cold nipping airs of poverty. But Gossan folks maintained that Josef Kester had started in life with as good prospects as most men, and that it was mainly his own fault if things had gone

ill with him, and the poor "Lamb" had gradually been shorn of its golden fleece. Gossan folks were not less hard in their judgment of the unsuccessful man than London folks, or Paris folks. But there was a grain of truth in what they said, for all that. Josef had too much of the inert passive good humour which distinguishes many of his countrymen, to push his way energetically through the world. Perhaps he could reckon as many pleasant hours in his past life as the richest of his neighbours. But the pleasant hours were over and gone, and had left him with empty pockets to look old age in the face. The hard-working, well-to-do neighbours might sometimes—but this they never acknowledged—envy the clear smooth forehead and placid smile which made old Josef look younger than his years; but they had only to put their hands in their pockets, and feel a soft bundle of very dirty and tattered bank-notes, to recover their self-esteem and good spirits immediately.

Kätchen drew in her head from the window, and went to take one more look at herself in the green mirror, which distorted her pretty face in a heart-breaking manner. But Kätchen knew the original by heart, and was not distressed by the bad translation she beheld in her glass. She proceeded to perch a tall sugar-loaf black hat on the top of her thick plaits of hair, and to stick a long silver arrow into the coil at the back.

"Kätchen! Kätchen!" called her father, from the lake below. He was sitting in a little boat just beneath her window, dressed in his best clothes, and ready to row to Hallstadt to church. "Make haste, my child, service will have begun."

"Coming, father, coming," said Kätchen, as she ran swiftly down the stairs, through the open house door, and stepped into the little boat that lay rocking gently, within a stone's throw of the inn. Kätchen stood up in the boat, and took an oar, which she managed with strength and skill. All the young women about Hallstadt and Gossan were used to propel themselves about the lake, and to handle an oar was as ordinary an accomplishment as to wield a knitting-needle. Kätchen rowed standing, and at every dip of her paddle into the water she bent well forward, displaying in the action a plump, well-turned leg and neat ankle, encased in the Sunday gear of white stockings and stout black boots.

"Fine bright day, Herr Kester," shouted a neighbour, whose boat, propelled by four stout damsels, shot past Kätchen's.

"Ay, very fine, very fine. Bright, as you say, but not sultry. Any news up your way?"

"Nothing very interesting," bawled back the neighbour, whose boat was rapidly shooting ahead of the Kesters' little craft. "Only one thing your Kätchen may care to hear. Fritz Rosenheim got a return fare at Ischl. Some foreigners wanted to go back to Salzburg the very day he was coming away. Lucky for him, isn't it?"

"My Kätchen doesn't care a button about it," roared Josef, angrily; but it is to be feared his words did not reach the ears for

which they were intended. Kätchen's pink cheeks grew scarlet, and she knit her flaxen eyebrows.

"Why should you say that, father?" she asked, pettishly. "I *do* care a button, more than a button, for Fritz's good luck."

"You don't care in the way neighbour Nelbeck meant. And I don't choose to allow folks to talk to me as if you did, Kätchen."

"But, father, I *do* care——"

"Nonsense! You think you do when you're contradicted, but it's all moonshine. You know you wouldn't marry Fritz, if I gave my consent to-morrow."

"Will you try me, father?"

"No, I won't. I disapprove of the whole thing. The prettiest girl in the district to throw herself away on a poor devil of a kutscher—a fellow who knows nothing in the world but how to guide his horses up and down the mountain roads, rain or hail, shade or shine—it's monstrous! And you, that might do so much better, too! Better, dowerless as you are, than many a well-portioned lass I could mention."

The boat grazed the pebbly landing-place at Hallstadt whilst Josef Kester was still in the midst of his grumbings against Kätchen, against his poverty, against his neighbours, and especially against the guilty Fritz—guilty, by his own confession, of being in love with a pretty girl whose father did not want him as a son-in-law. The crime is heinous, though, alas! too common. But old Josef's discontent dispersed itself in words, and left him placid and smiling as usual, when he walked into the little evangelical place of worship, followed by his pretty daughter.

CHAPTER II.

KÄTCHEN sat very still during the long controversial discourse that flew high over the heads of the simple congregation. Very still and seemingly attentive sat little Kätchen, but her thoughts were busily occupied, and *not* with the sermon. "Was she really, really so fond of Fritz after all? or was her father right in saying it was only moonshine?" She acknowledged to herself that she never did feel so kindly disposed towards her lover as when some sage adviser set before her the folly and unsuitableness of marrying him. Next to *this* spur to her affections, came the idea of any other girl winning Fritz Rosenheim. The young man was very popular, and in his roving life he had opportunities of making many acquaintances. Smart chambermaids at the big hotels in Salzburg and Ischl knew and smiled upon him. Even landladies' daughters at the mountain inns condescended to a little flirtation with the good-looking kutscher. And his unlagging good humour and gallant bearing towards the fair, made the jingle of his horses' bells a very welcome sound to many feminine ears along his line of route. But then——To be sure it was very nice to have Fritz so admiring and so devoted, and to hear him protest that there was not in all Austria, nay, in all Germany, a girl

fit to wipe the little shoes of Katerina Kester. Yes, that was pleasant, without doubt. But it wouldn't last so! Fritz couldn't be content to let that agreeable state of things continue comfortably. It was very unreasonable of him, but he actually wanted to have a formal promise of marriage from his idol, and to be publicly betrothed to her. Kätchen gave such an impatient little shiver at the idea of being irrevocably bound to marry Fritz, and tossed up her head so like a wild colt that has never known bit or bridle, that I, for my part, believe her father to have been right about the moonshine, and that she wasn't so very much in love after all.

The cessation of the pastor's sonorous German polysyllables startled her from a reverie. Kätchen was not much given to reverie in general, but there was still a wide-eyed look of abstraction on her countenance as she walked forth with her father from the little church. At the entrance they came on quite a crowd of country-folks, some of whom had just been hearing mass in the Catholic chapel. A rosy, well-fed couple of Sisters of Mercy passed through the knot of people, receiving pleasant and respectful salutations alike from the orthodox and the heretics. Josef Kester was known to everybody, and stood for some time exchanging gossip with his neighbours, and taking long luxurious pulls at the gaudy china pipe suspended by a green cord round his neck. Kätchen, still in an unusually thoughtful mood, walked slowly down to the brink of the lake, whence a narrow wooden plank ran out a short distance into the water, for the convenience of boatmen and their passengers. Kätchen seated herself on a pile of wood cut and stacked for fuel, and stared absently at the lake, and the opposite hills rich in colour, and steeped in a great glory of sunlight.

"Good day, Mam'sell Katerina," said a high thin voice close at her ear. She started and looked round. The address was unusually formal and respectful. Her own acquaintance never bestowed on her the title of "Mam'sell," and usually abbreviated the utterance of her christian name. The polite speaker was a tall spare man of about five and forty, with a very high bald forehead, a sallow face, and thick bay-coloured moustaches. He wore spectacles, and blinked very much with his light grey eyes. "Good day, Mam'sell Katerina," said he again, seeing that Kätchen stared at him without speaking. "I fear you do not recognise me. I am Caspar Ebner, the landlord of the Black Eagle in Gossan, at your service." And he drew himself up a little, and twisted his fingers in a heavy silver watch-chain that crossed his black satin waistcoat. Herr Ebner wore a suit of dark blue cloth, with gilt buttons, a tall shiny French hat, and the black satin waistcoat aforesaid.

"Thou dear Heaven!" cried Kätchen, jumping up from her seat, and making a little curtsey. "I beg your pardon, Herr Ebner, but I couldn't for the moment think who it was." She might have added that her surprise

was not much diminished when she did know who it was; for the rich landlord of the Black Eagle had never accosted her in her life before, though she knew him by sight well enough, and had sometimes fancied he looked at her with a certain amount of admiration.

"The Herr Pastor was somewhat lengthy to-day," said Ebner, half seating himself on the log of wood on which Kätchen had resumed her place.

"Was he?" asked she, without thinking of what she was saying, for her brain was busily trying to puzzle out why Herr Ebner should speak to her.

"Yes; somewhat lengthy. At least, I fancied so. You were a more devout and attentive listener, mam'sell. I observed your absorption."

Kätchen coloured, partly from a prick of conscience, partly at the idea of having been watched. Then the thought that was in her mind came to her tongue, although she had not wished to betray it. "I never saw you in church before, Herr Ebner," said she.

It was now the landlord's turn to colour; that is to say, the lemon hue of his face deepened to orange. "Most likely not, Mam'sell Katerina. I—in fact, I don't go to church in a usual way. I read though, and think a good deal on these subjects, and I have formed, I confess, certain theories, which—" Here he stopped abruptly, catching Kätchen's point-blank stare of bewilderment. "I—I beg pardon. These grave and speculative topics are hardly suited to one so young, and—and—ahem—so lovely as yourself."

"Here's father," cried Kätchen, with an unmistakable look of relief; and she even made a little step towards her father and away from Ebner.

"Good day, Herr Ebner," said Kester, pulling off his soft felt hat, a courtesy which the other instantly requited by lifting his own stiff shiny head-covering high in the air. "I've been staying behind to have a little chat with some old neighbours, and kept this young woman of mine waiting, you see."

Old Kester glanced sharply at his daughter as he spoke, and Kätchen noticed that her father did not seem nearly so much surprised as she had been to see the host of the Black Eagle speaking so affably to her.

"I am—I mean—are you," stammered Ebner, with an awkward hesitation.

"Are we going to row back to Gossan now? Yes, we are," said Kester, promptly.

"My boat is here, with three of the boatmen from St. Emmerau. Would you—that is, if Mam'sell Katerina—it's hot, rowing in the middle of the day—"

"Thank you, Herr Ebner," responded the rival landlord, with—to Kätchen—astonishing alacrity; and then, before she understood the arrangement clearly, she was handed into Ebner's boat and seated in state on a cushioned bench under an awning, instead of standing up with a heavy paddle in her sunburnt hand. One of the boatmen made Kester's deserted little craft fast to the stern of the larger boat, and away they

went, swiftly, cutting a bright furrow through the glassy water, and breaking into fragments the peaceful shadows of the great hills that lay deep in the lake with their peaks pointing downward into a second and still bluer heaven than that which stretched overhead. Kätchen was bewildered. That she should be in a boat at all, without aiding to propel that boat, was wonderful; but that the Black Eagle should have doffed his usual imperial fierceness, and—instead of sticking his long talons into the fleece of the Golden Lamb—should coo with dove-like softness, and invite his rival even into his own nest—this was more wonderful by far. Not that Caspar Ebner was really very fierce in himself. But Kätchen was used to think of him as a very high and mighty personage—one to whose successful rapacity was partly owing the decay and ill fortune that hung about the meeker Lamb. Josef Kester's ill success was, on his own showing, always "somebody else's" fault. In this respect, perhaps, Josef Kester was not entirely singular. And so the indefinite "somebody else" who wrought all the mischief to the Golden Lamb had gradually taken shape in Kätchen's mind, and Herr Caspar Ebner was its living embodiment.

Many an evening in the old rafted kitchen of the inn had Kätchen listened to her father's long speeches, uttered oracularly from behind dense clouds of coarse tobacco-smoke, when the old man would descant on the Lamb's ill treatment and the undeserved prosperity of the Eagle, and lament the strange perversity of travellers who *would* frequent Herr Ebner's house, to the neglect and detriment of his own establishment. And now, behold here was her father sitting placidly under the enemy's awning, rowed luxuriously by the enemy's boatmen, and chatting cheerfully with the enemy himself! The boat scudded along lightly, bounding to the strong strokes of the rowers, and soon reached the landing-place at Gossan, where Kätchen was handed out by Herr Ebner, with much politeness, though a little awkwardly. She and her father bade him farewell, and thanked him, and were about to draw their own little boat up high and dry on the beach, but Ebner desired his own boatmen to do that, and asked Kester and Kätchen to do him the honour of dining with him, as the mid-day meal was just ready. Josef made some little objection, but only by way of what he considered good manners; for he finally accepted the invitation for his daughter and himself, and they followed their host into his private sitting-room at the Black Eagle. It was a pleasant apartment on the ground floor, with windows looking on to the lake. Here the cloth was laid for dinner, and a tall chambermaid came forward to take Kätchen's hat from her, and to offer her any assistance she might need in the arrangement of her dress. She had, of course, taken the cue from her master's behaviour, for Kätchen knew well enough that at most times Therese would consider herself quite above waiting on the daughter of old Josef Kester, of the Golden Lamb. The dinner was very good and the

wine excellent, but somehow the little party did not seem to be quite at ease. Josef, it is true, ate and drank unrestrained by shyness; but Kätchen was too full of wonder at the unexpected honour to feel much appetite, and Herr Ebner blinked nervously through his spectacles, and hesitated and stammered in his speech in a very disconcerting manner. When the dinner was over, the guests rose to take their leave, Josef protesting that he must go, as he had "so many things to attend to." Ebner accompanied them to the entrance-hall, and there bashfully offered a bunch of roses to Kätchen. He had had them gathered in his little garden during dinner-time, and now they were lying ready to be presented in a tasteful little straw basket. Kätchen took the fragrant June roses with a smile and a bright blush of pleasure. It was certainly very nice to be treated like a real lady, and she was quite enough of a coquette to enjoy the consciousness of being admired. But all of a sudden she gave a start, and the colour left her round cheeks for a moment, to rush back deeper than before; for there stood Fritz Rosenheim right in the doorway, looking at her in blank astonishment. He had a long driving-whip in his hand and wore his smartest suit—a bright blue postilion's jacket, studded with silver buttons, leathern breeches, and high boots coming above the knee; and in his low-crowned hat, stuck on one side of his head, was fastened a bunch of rich red carnations, the gift, probably, of some coquettish chambermaid or landlady along his line of route.

"Good day, Fritz," said Kätchen, desperately, speaking first; for poor Fritz's presence of mind seemed clean gone. He muttered some salutation in reply, and then turned to grasp the hand which Josef Kester heartily held out to him. "Welcome, Fritz, my boy," said he; "I expected you to-day, for I heard news of you from old Nelbeck." Then Fritz dropped his hat respectfully to the landlord of the Black Eagle, who gravely nodded in return.

"I've brought some travellers from Ischl, sir," said Fritz; "a foreign lady and gentleman and their courier. I told them they couldn't be anywhere better treated or more comfortable than at the Black Eagle in Gossan."

"They will be taken care of, kutscher. I hope you have seen to your horses. Yes—eh? Well, then, go and tell the keller to give you a bottle of Rudesheimer to drink my health in."

Fritz touched his hat again, and made way for the Kesters to pass out. Josef said, as he went away, "See you to-night, Fritz; you'll come and smoke a pipe in the old kitchen as usual."

Kätchen walked home in a state of ill humour that darkened her pretty childish face. She was vexed that Fritz should have come upon her just when he did—vexed to see him touch his hat like a servant to the man at whose table she

had been dining—vexed with poor Herr Ebner for his good nature in treating the kutscher to wine. Why should Fritz accept his wine? He was able to pay for it. And vexed above all with her father for inviting the young man to come and "smoke a pipe in the kitchen as usual." As usual! What would the landlord of the Black Eagle think of them? He never smoked pipes in the kitchen with a kutscher. This last was a very unworthy thought, and ungenerous towards Fritz, who would never have been ashamed of association with her before the highest in the land. But then I really do believe old Josef had been right about the moonshine. Still, objecting as he did to any semblance of love-making between Rosenheim and his daughter, he should not have encouraged the young man to come to his house. But this was Josef's way—one of the many weaknesses in his easy-going nature that had helped to smooth the down-hill path on which he had slidden so rapidly from comfort to poverty. He liked Fritz. The young fellow's cheery talk and pleasant manner, and the news he brought from the busier world he traversed in his journeys, were very agreeable stimulants after the sluggish monotony of life at the Golden Lamb. And, like many inert men, Josef Kester loved nothing better than to witness and hear of traits of energy and activity in which he was not expected to participate. As to the after consequences of all this familiar intercourse, why, that would come all right somehow. The young folks would make love a little—why not?—but it would be all in a wild and purposeless sort of way, that would hurt neither of them very deeply. He could be very angry when any one took it for granted that the moonshine meant something real, and spoke as old Nelbeck had spoken. Not the less angry, perhaps, from a secret self-reproach in the matter. But the moment Fritz reappeared he could not resist the temptation of his company, and, besides, the young man *couldn't* be so desperately in earnest. In this he was thoroughly mistaken; but it was a comfortable theory, which lightened his own responsibility, and therefore Josef Kester clung to it.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER IX. CLEARED UP.

THE shock communicated to George Dallas by his step-father's letter was violent and terrible in proportion to the resolutions which had been growing up in his mind, and gaining strength and fixedness with each day's absence from the old accustomed scenes of dissipation and sources of temptation. Like all persons of similar temperament, he was easily overcome by agitation, and his eager nature led him to anticipate evil as readily as it caused him to enjoy good thoroughly. He was a strong man physically, but a sickening, weak shudder, such as might have shaken a woman, shook him as he read the few formal lines which conveyed to him so much more than their writer had known or intended. Was it all to be in vain? Was the golden time, the precious opportunity, gone by for ever? Was she to die, or to die to him at least, and never to know that his repentance had been real, that the lesson had been effectual, that the reform had been inaugurated?

The terms in which Mr. Carruthers had written to his step-son were as vague as they were formal, and the uncertainty to which the letter condemned him was as agonising as the misery which it produced. Where was she? He did not know; he had no means of knowing. How great were her sufferings? How imminent was her danger? These points were beyond the reach of his investigation. He knew that he was to blame for his mother's illness; he saw all things now in a new and clear light, and though his was no miraculous reformation, no sudden transformation from sinner to saint, but rather an evidence of mental growth and refinement under the influence of a new order of feelings, working on a singularly pliable temperament, George Dallas was so different to what he had been, that he shrank not only with disgust, but with wonder, from the contemplation of the perverse folly which had led to such results. He had always been dissipated, worthless, and ungrateful, he thought; why had he never realised the guilt of being so before? Why, indeed? Having been blind, now he saw, having been foolish, he had become wise. The ordinary experience,

after all, but which every man and woman believes in his or her case exceptional, had come to this young man, but had come laden with exceedingly bitter grief. With swift, sudden fear, too, and stinging self-distrust; for if his mother were indeed lost to him, the great motive, a real one, however tardily acknowledged, would be lost too, and then, how should he, how could he, answer for himself? Just then, in the first keenness of his suffering, in the first thrill of fear which the sense of impending punishment sent through him, he did not think of his love, he drew no strength, no counsel, no consolation from it; the only image before his mind was that of his mother, long bowed down, and now broken, under the accumulated load of grief and disappointment which he had laid upon her. Mr. Carruthers had acted characteristically, George thought, in writing to him, as he had done, merely telling him of his mother's illness and removal, but giving him no address, affording him no opportunity of writing to her. So much he had done for his own conscience and credit's sake, not actuated by any sympathy for him. The old anger towards his step-father, the old temptation to lay the blame of all his own ill-conduct on Mr. Carruthers, to regard his banishment from Poynings as cause rather than effect, arose fiercely in George's heart, as he read the curt sentences of the letter over and over again; but they were met and conquered by a sudden softened remembrance of his mother's appeal to him for a just judgment of her husband, whom she loved, and the better nature of the young man, newly and strongly aroused, got the victory.

"No, no," he said, impetuously and aloud, "he's not to blame; the fault is mine, and if I am never to have the chance of telling her the truth, I'll tell it to myself at all events."

George's resolution to go to England was soon taken. He must know more than Mrs. Carruthers had told him, and only at Poynings could he learn it. It never occurred to him that Mrs. Brookes might have accompanied his mother abroad. His impulsive nature rarely permitted him to foresee any obstacle in the way of a design or a desire, and he acted in this instance with his usual headlong precipitation.

When George Dallas reached London, he found he would have just sufficient time to go to South Molton-street and see Routh or Harriet for a few minutes, before he could catch a

train for Amherst. Arrived at Routh's former residence, he was surprised to observe, as he got out of a hansom, that a card, displayed in the parlour window, announced "A drawing-room floor to let." The hall door was opened at his summons, with unusual alacrity, and in reply to his inquiry, the servant, a newly engaged one who had never seen him before, informed him that Mr. and Mrs. Routh had "left," and were to be found at Queen-street, Mayfair. George stood, for a moment, irresolute in surprise, and the servant repeated the address, fancying he had not heard her. His face was towards the open door, and he turned his head sharply round, as a boy's voice said, in a peculiar pert tone which had an odd indefinite familiarity for his ear:

"Any letters for Mr. Routh to-day, Mary Jane? 'cos, if so, hand 'em over."

The speaker was Mr. James Swain, who had come up behind George Dallas unperceived, and who, when he saw the young man's face, gave an involuntary start, and dropped his saucy manner on the instant.

"Yes, there's three letters and a circ'lar for Mr. Routh," replied Mary Jane, in a sulky tone; "and missis says as she hopes Mr. Routh will put his address in the paper or something, for people is always a comin' and makin' us think as they're lodgers." Then with a glance at George, which seemed to imply that he might not have been considered ineligible in that capacity, Mary Jane went to fetch the letters, and Dallas addressed Jim Swain.

"Are you going back to Mr. Routh's direct?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered Jim. "I come every day, since they've been gone, to see after letters and messages."

"Then you can take a message from me," said George, pointing the observation with a sixpence. "Tell Mr. Routh Mr. Dallas has come to London, having heard bad news, and has gone to his mother's house. You won't forget?"

"No, sir, I won't forget," said Jim, in a tone of satisfactory assurance.

"Say I expect to get back to-morrow, and will come to see him at once. Mr. Dallas—that's my name, remember."

George then jumped into the hansom again, and was driven away to the railway station.

"Mr. Dallas," said Jim Swain to himself as he walked slowly down the street, carrying the letters confided to him by Mary Jane—"that's your name, is it? I wonder wot you've bin up to; and where you've bin up to it? I shall tell *her* the gent's message—not *him*."

The night had fallen upon the woods and fields of Poynings, and no light gleamed from the stately old house, save one ray, which shone through the open window of the housekeeper's room. By the casement sat George Dallas, his arm upon the window-sill, his head leaning against his hand, the cool fresh air of the summer night coming gratefully to his flushed and heated face. Opposite, and close to him, sat Mrs. Brookes, still wearing, though their conference had lasted many hours, the look of agi-

tation beyond the strength to bear it which is so painful to see on the faces of the aged. All had been explained between the old woman and the prodigal son of her beloved mistress, and the worst of her fears had been dispelled. George had not the guilt of murder on his soul. The chain of circumstances was indeed as strong as ever, but the old woman did not retain the smallest fear. His word had reassured her—indeed, the first glance at his face, in the midst of the terror and surprise of their meeting, had at once and for ever put her apprehensions to flight. Innocence of *that*, at least, was in his face, in his hurried agitated greeting, in the bewilderment with which he heard her allusion to her letter, in his total unconsciousness of the various emotions which tore her heart among them. She saw, she foresaw, no explanation of the circumstances which had led to the fatal mistake she had made; she saw only that her boy was innocent, and the vastness, the intensity, of the relief sufficed, in the first moments of their meeting, to deprive it of the horror and bitterness with which, had she had any anticipation of such an event, she would have regarded it. But the first relief and the full explanation—all that George had to tell her, all she had to tell him—could not change the facts as regarded Mrs. Carruthers, could not alter the irrevocable, the miserable past.

When the first confusion, excitement, and incoherent mutual questioning had given way to a more settled and satisfactory conversation, Mrs. Brookes told George all that had occurred—the visit of the official gentleman from London, the servants' version of his business, the interview between Mr. Carruthers and Evans, and the suspicion and fear, only too reasonable, to which all the unfortunate circumstances had given rise.

It was with the utmost difficulty that George arrived at a clear understanding of the old woman's narrative, and came to realise how overwhelming was the presumption against him. By degrees he began to recal the circumstances which had immediately preceded and followed his clandestine visit to Poynings. He recalled the remarks he had heard at The Mercury office; he remembered that there had been some talk of a murder, and that he had paid no attention to it, but had gone away as soon as possible, and never given the matter another thought. To find himself implicated in a crime of so terrible a nature, to find that circumstances had brought him in contact with such a deed, filled him with horror and stupefaction; to know that his mother had been forced to conceive such a suspicion was, even without the horrible addition of the effect produced on her, suffering far greater than any he had ever known. He felt giddy, sick, and bewildered, and could but look piteously at his faithful old friend, with a white face and wild haggard eyes.

"She believed it?" he said again and again.

"No, George, no; she only feared it, and she could not bear the fear; no wonder, for I could hardly bear it, and I am stronger than she is, and not your mother, after all. But just think,

George. You bought the coat from Evans, and the man who wore that coat was seen in the company of the murdered man the last time he was seen alive. I knew there must be some dreadful mistake. I knew you never lifted your hand against any man's life, and that some one else must have got possession of the coat; but your mother said no, that you had worn it when she saw you at Amherst, and nothing could remove the impression. George, what did you do with the coat you bought at Evans's?"

"I had it down here, sure enough," answered George, "and I did wear it when she last saw me. I left it at Mr. Routh's afterwards, by mistake, and took one of his abroad with me; but this is a horrid mystery altogether. Who is the man who has been murdered? What is the motive?"

"I cannot tell you that, George," said Mrs. Brookes; "but I will give you the papers, and then you will know all, and you will understand how much she suffered."

The old woman left George alone for a few minutes, while she went to her bedroom to get the newspapers which she locked securely away at the bottom of a trunk. During her absence the young man strode about the room distractedly, trying in vain to collect his thoughts and set them down steadily to the solution of the terrible mystery which surrounded him.

"Here they are, George," said Ellen, as she entered the room and handed him a roll of newspapers. "Sit down here, by the window, and try to read them quietly. I must leave you now, and tell the servants who you are, and that you are going to stay here to-night—there must be no concealment now; thank God, it's not wanted any longer. Perhaps out of all this evil good may come, my boy."

He had sat down by the window, and was eagerly opening the roll of paper, and seeking the account of the murder. Mrs. Brookes paused by his side for a moment, laid her withered hand gently on his hair, and then left him. A moment after he started up from his chair, and cried out:

"Good God! the man was Deane!"

The shock of this discovery was extreme. Wholly unable as he had been to account for the coincidence which Mrs. Brookes's imperfect story (for, like most persons of her class, she was an unskilful narrator of facts) had unfolded to him, he had never supposed his connexion with it real, and now he saw it all, and in a moment perceived the gravity of his situation. The nameless man whom he had seen so often, and yet known so slightly; concerning whom he had speculated often and carelessly; whom no one had recognised; whose singular dress the waiter at the tavern had described in his evidence; the date; all was conclusive. The man murdered was Deane. But who was the murderer? How was it that no one had recognised the body? With all his mysterious ways, in spite of the callous selfishness which had rendered him indifferent to companionship save in the mere pursuit of his pleasures, it seemed wonderful that no one should have been able to identify him.

"There's Routh, now," said George to himself, "he must have heard of the finding of the body, he must have read the description of the dress; he may have seen the man's fur coat before, though I never did. To be sure, he did not dine with us that day, but he knew where Deane dined, and with whom. What can Routh have been about?"

These and a thousand questions of a similar nature George Dallas put to himself, without finding any answer to them, without stilling the tumult in his mind. He tried to arrange the circumstances in their order of occurrence, and to think them out, but in vain; he could not do so yet: all was confusion and vague horror. He had not liked this man. Theirs had been the mere casual association of convenience and amusement—an association, perhaps, the foremost of all those which he was firmly determined never to renew; and yet he could not regard its dreadful ending with indifference. The life which had perverted George had not hardened him, and he could not readily throw off the impression created by the discovery that the man with whom he had joined in the pursuit of reckless and degrading pleasure had died a violent death within so short a time of their last meeting. When Mrs. Brookes came into the room again, the expression of the young man's face terrified her afresh.

"Ellen," he said, "this is a dreadful business, apart from my unhappy complication with it, and what it has cost my dear mother. I knew this unhappy man; he was a Mr. Deane. I dined with him at that tavern in the Strand. I did wear that coat. All the circumstances are correct, though all the inferences are false. I begin to understand it all now; but who can have murdered him, and for what motive, I cannot conceive. The most natural thing in the world was that they should suspect me, as the man who wore the coat. Mr. Evans will recognise me, no doubt, as he told Mr. Carruthers."

"No, no, George; the poor old man is dead," interrupted Mrs. Brookes.

"Dead?" said George. "Well, he seemed an honest fellow, and I am sorry for it; but it makes no difference in my position. When I communicate with the police, I will admit all he could prove."

"Must you do that, George?" asked Mrs. Brookes, wistfully. She had a natural dread of the law in the abstract.

"Of course I must, nurse; I can tell them who the unfortunate man was, and account for him up to a very late hour on the night of the seventeenth of April."

"Take care, George," said the old woman. "If you can't account for yourself afterwards, you can't clear yourself."

The observation was shrewd and sensible. George felt it so, and said, "Never mind that. I am innocent, and when the time comes I shall have no difficulty in proving myself innocent."

"You know best, George," said the old woman, with a resigned sigh; "but tell me, who was this poor man?"

"Sit down and I will tell you all about it."

Then George seated his old friend close beside him, and told her the whole story of his intercourse with Stewart Routh, of his knowledge of Deane, his last meeting with him, their dinner together, the adjournment to the billiard-rooms, the money won by Dallas from Deane, and his leaving town early the next morning for Amherst.

"That was the day they found the body, was it not?" asked Mrs. Brookes.

"Let me see," said George; and he again referred to the newspapers.

"Yes, it was on Friday, the eighteenth—in the evening. I was down at Amherst then, nurse; that was the day I saw my mother last."

He sighed, but a smile stole over his face also. A cherished memory of that day abode in his heart.

Then Mrs. Brookes questioned George concerning Routh and his wife, and told him of Harriet's visit, and all the emotion and fear which it had caused her. George was touched and grateful.

"That was like her," he said; "she is the truest of friends, a treasure among women. I wonder she did not write to me, though, when she sent on Mr. Carruthers's letter."

The observation passed unnoticed by Mrs. Brookes. Had she asked when the letter had reached George, a discovery, dangerous to the interests of Harriet and Routh, might have been made; but she had very dim notions of continental places and distances, and the time consumed in postal transmission.

"They knew this poor man; did they not know that he was the murdered person?"

"No," said George, "they had no notion of it. How shocked they will be when I tell them of it! Routh will be the best person in the world to tell me how to go about communicating with the police authorities. But now, Ellen, tell me about my mother."

Time went over, and the night fell, and the old woman and the young man still talked together, and she tried to comfort him, and make him believe that all would be well. But George was slow to take such comfort—full of remorse and self-condemnation, of gloom and foreboding. The mercurial temperament of the young man made him a bad subject for such suspense and self-reproach, and though he had no shadow of fear of any trouble to come to him from the evidence on the inquest, there was a dull brooding sense of apprehension over him, against which he had no power, no heart, to strive. So he listened to the story of his mother's illness and departure, the physicians' opinions, and Mr. Carruthers's plans for her benefit and comfort, and darker and darker fell the shadow upon his heart.

"We have had no news since they left Paris," said Mrs. Brookes, in conclusion, "but I expect to see Miss Carruthers to-morrow. She will have a letter from her uncle."

"Miss Carruthers?" said George, lifting up his head with renewed animation. "Has she not gone abroad with them?"

"No," said Mrs. Brookes; "she is staying

at the Sycamores, Sir Thomas Boldero's place. Sir Thomas is her uncle on the mother's side. She rides over very often to see me, and I expect her to-morrow."

"At what hour does she generally come?" asked George.

"In the afternoon; after lunch."

"Well, I shall be in London by that time, nurse; so there is no danger of my incurring my step-father's wrath this time by an encounter with the heiress."

There was a momentary touch of bitterness in George's voice, but his slow sad smile contradicted it.

"Ah, George!" said the old woman. "Take heart. All will be well, and the time will come when you will be welcome here."

"Perhaps so, nurse. In the mean time, you will let me know what news Miss Carruthers brings, and especially where my mother is, and their next move."

That night George Dallas slept for the first time under the roof of the old house at Poynings; but an early hour in the morning found him on his way back to town.

When Clare Carruthers, mounted on Sir Lancelot and escorted by Cæsar, arrived at Poynings, on the following afternoon, she was surprised to find Mrs. Brookes looking well and cheerful. The girl had brought good news. Mrs. Carruthers had borne the journey well, and it was proposed that she should leave Paris and proceed to the south of France after the interval of a week. Clare roamed over the house and gardens as usual. She was beautiful as ever, but with a new and graver beauty than of old. There was no observant eye to mark the change, no kindred spirit to note and share the girl's trouble. She was quite alone. When she returned from her ramble, and while her horse was being brought round, she went to Mrs. Brookes's room to bid her good-bye. The old woman took two letters out of her desk, and said:

"Do you remember these letters, Miss Carruthers? You brought them to me when Mrs. Carruthers was first taken ill."

"Yes, I remember. What of them?" Clare answered, carelessly.

"Will you have the kindness to enclose them in a large envelope, and direct them to Mr. George Dallas for me?"

"Certainly," said Clare; but she looked a little surprised, for Mrs. Brookes wrote remarkably well for a person of her class.

"I wrote to him lately," said Mrs. Brookes, "and the letter did not reach him; so I suppose I directed it indistinctly."

Clare sat down at the table, and in a large bold hand wrote the address which Harriet had given upon the envelope.

"You are sending Mr. Dallas these letters that he may read them, as his mother is unable?" asked Clare, to whom the forbidden subject of Mrs. Carruthers's son always offered more or less temptation.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the old woman; "I am pretty sure they come from Mr. Felton, and ought to be seen to."

"And who is Mr. Felton?" said Clare, rising and laying down her pen. "I'll post them as I pass through the village," she added.

"Mr. Felton is Mrs. Carruthers's brother," said Mrs. Brookes. "He has been in America many years, but she said something lately about his coming home."

Clare said no more, but took her leave, and went her way. She posted the packet for George Dallas at the village, and, as she rode on, her fair face bore the impress of a painful recollection. She was thinking of the morning on which she had ventured to send the warning to him who was so unworthy of the fancies she had cherished—him of whom she could not think without a shudder, of whom she hardly dared to think at all. When the post was delivered the following morning at the Sycamores, a large packet was placed before Miss Carruthers. It was directed to her, and contained two numbers of *The Piccadilly*, with two instalments of George's serial story, and on the fly leaf of one were the words, "From Paul Ward."

CHAPTER X. ONCE MORE TIDED OVER.

AN air of respectability and the presence of good taste characterised the house in Queen-street, Mayfair, now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Routh. These things were inseparable from a dwelling of Harriet's. She had the peculiar feminine talent for embellishing the place she lived in, however simple and small were the means at her disposal. The lodgings at South Molton-street had never had the comfortless look and feeling of lodgings, and now there was apparently no lack of money to make the new home all that a house of its size and capabilities need be. Harriet moved about her present dwelling, not as she had moved about her former home, indeed, with happy alacrity, but with the same present judgment, the same critical eye; and though all she did now was done mechanically, it was done thoroughly.

Harriet was very restless on the day that was to bring George Dallas to their new residence. She had duly received his message from Jim Swain, and though the keen eye of the boy, who was singularly observant of her in every particular that came under his notice, had detected that the intelligence imparted a shock to her, she had preserved her composure wonderfully, in conveying the unwelcome news to her husband. Routh had received it with far less calmness. He felt in a moment that the delay of Harriet's projected letter, a delay prescribed by himself, had induced the return of Dallas, and, angry with himself for the blunder, he was angry with her that she had not foreseen the risk. He was often angry with Harriet now; a strange kind of dislike to her arose frequently in his base and ungrateful heart, and the old relations between them had undergone a change, unavowed by either, but felt keenly by both. The strength of character on which Routh knew he could rely to any extent, which he knew would never fail him or its owner, made him strangely afraid, in the midst of all the con-

fidence it inspired, and he was constrained in his wife's presence, and haunted out of it.

Stewart Routh had never been a rough-spoken man; the early tradition of his education had preserved him from the external coarseness of a vagabond life, but the underlying influences of an evil temper asserted themselves at times. Thus when Harriet told him gently, and with her blue eyes bright with reassuring encouragement, that Dallas was in England, and would be with them on the morrow, he turned upon her with an angry oath. She shrank back from him for a moment, but the next, she said, gently:

"We must meet this, Stewart, like all the rest, and it can be done."

"How?" he said, rudely; "how is it to be met?"

"I will meet it, Stewart," she replied. "Trust me: you have often done so, and never had cause to regret the consequence. I am changed, I know. I have not so much quickness and readiness as I had, but I have no less courage. Remember what my influence over George Dallas was; it is still unchanged; let me use it to the utmost of my ability. If it fails, why then," she spoke very slowly, and leaned her hand heavily on his shoulder with the words, "then we have but to do what I at least have always contemplated."

Their eyes met, and they looked steadily at each other for some moments; then withdrawing his gaze from her with difficulty, Routh said, sullenly, "Very well, let it be so; you must see him first; but I suppose I shall have to see him; I can't escape that, can I?"

She looked at him with a queer glance for a moment, and the shadow of a smile just flickered over her lips. Could he escape? That was his thought, his question. Did she ever ask it for herself? But the impression, irresistible to the woman's keen perception, was only momentary. She answered the base query instantly.

"No, you cannot; the thing is impossible. But I will see him first, and alone; and then if I succeed with him, no risk can come of your seeing him; if I fail, the danger must be faced."

He turned sulkily away, and leaned upon the window-frame, looking idly into the street.

"You don't know when he will be here, I suppose?" he said, presently.

"I do not; but I fancy early in the day."

"It's too bad. I am sick of this. The thing is over now. Why is it always cropping up?"

He spoke to himself rather than to her; but she heard him, and the colour flew over her pale face at his words. He left the room soon after, and then Harriet sat down in the weary way that had become habitual to her, and murmured:

"It is done and over; and he wonders why it is always cropping up. And I——"

Stewart Routh did not return home until late that night. Such absences had become common now, and Harriet made no comment then or ever. How she passed the hours of solitude he did not inquire, and, indeed, she could hardly have told. On this particular evening she had employed herself on the close and attentive perusal of a number of letters. They were all

written by George Dallas, and comprised the whole of his correspondence with her. She read them with attentive eye and knitted brow; and when she locked the packet up in her desk again, she looked, as Mrs. Brookes had seen her, like a woman who had a purpose, and who clearly saw her way to its fulfilment.

But the next day Harriet was restless. She could do the thing that lay before her, but she wanted the time for doing it to be come; she wanted to get it over. If this were weakness, then in this Harriet was weak.

Immediately after breakfast, Stewart Routh went out. Only a few words had been exchanged between him and Harriet on the subject of George's expected visit, and Harriet had gone to the drawing-room when George came. She met him with the old frank welcome which he remembered so well, and, in answer to his inquiry for Routh, said she was momentarily expecting him.

"You know what brought me back to England," George said, when he was seated, and the first greeting was over; "you got my message?"

"That bad news had reached you. Yes," replied Harriet. "I was just about to write to you. You would have had my letter to-day. I learned from the newspapers that your mother was ill, and—"

"And went to see about it for me. I know all your goodness, Mrs. Routh, and can never thank you for it half enough. It is only of a piece, though, with all your goodness to me. You have always been the best and truest of friends. My old nurse told me all about your visit. God bless you, Mrs. Routh." And George Dallas took her hand, and, for the second time in his life, kissed it.

There was a pause, a dangerous pause. Harriet felt it, for her heart was beating thickly, and her face was not under such command but that the interested eyes which were looking into it might read the traces of a deep and painful emotion.

"You have been comforted by your visit to Poynings," she said. "You have more hope and relief about your mother? Mrs. Brookes has told you all particulars."

"Yes, Mrs. Routh, I did hear all the particulars, and I also made an extraordinary and terrible discovery in connexion with that illness."

"Indeed!" said Harriet, leaning towards him with the liveliest interest and concern in every feature of her face. "It is not that the illness is of a hopeless nature, I hope?"

"I trust not," he said, solemnly; "but, Mrs. Routh, my mother has been nearly killed by being obliged to suspect me of a dreadful crime."

"A dreadful crime! You, Mr. Dallas! What do you mean?"

"I mean," said Dallas, "that a murder has been committed, in which I would appear to have been implicated. I know what I am about to tell you will agitate and distress you, Mrs. Routh, and one of the most mysterious points of a mysterious subject is, that it should be my lot to tell it to you." He hesitated, then went

on: "I don't know whether I ought to tell you all that I have heard. I have to consult Routh on some important matters, so that it is the more unfortunate that he is out of the way, as no time must be lost in what I have to do."

The occasion had come now, and Harriet was equal to it. It was with a smile, serious but quite unembarrassed, that she said:

"Don't depose me from the position of your confidant, George." She called him by his christian name for the first time. "You know Stewart has no secret from me. Whatever you would tell to him, tell to me. I have more time at your disposal than he has, though not more friendship. In this matter, count us as one. Indeed," she added, with a very skilful assumption of playfulness, which did not, however, alter the gravity of George's manner, "as I am your correspondent, I claim precedence by prescriptive right."

"I hardly know how to tell you, Mrs. Routh; all the circumstances are so shocking, and so very, very strange. You and Routh have been rather surprised, have you not, by the sudden disappearance of Deane? Routh always thought him an odd, eccentric, unaccountable sort of fellow, coming nobody knew whence, and likely to go nobody knew whither; but yet it has surprised you and Routh a little that, since the day we were to have dined together in the Strand, Deane has never turned up, hasn't it?"

The strength and self-control which formed such striking features in Harriet's character were severely tried, almost beyond their limits, by the expectation of the revelation which George was about to make; but there was not a questioning tone in her voice, not a quiver on her lip, as the minutes passed by, while she won him more and more securely by her calm interest and friendliness. His growing anxiety to see Routh confirmed her in the belief that he knew all that his mother and Mrs. Brookes had known. Remembering the agony she had suffered when she and George had last talked together, and feeling that the present crisis was scarcely less momentous, she rallied all her powers—and they were considerable—and asked him boldly what it was he had to communicate to her. In a voice of the deepest solemnity, he said, taking her hand in his:

"The man who has been murdered, of whose murder my mother was led to suspect me, was Philip Deane!"

"God God!" cried Harriet, and shrank back in her chair, covering her face with her hands.

He had reason to say that the news he had to tell her would agitate and distress her. Her whole frame crept and trembled, and a chill moisture broke out on her smooth forehead and pale shivering cheeks. George was alarmed at her distress, and she knew by the intensity of her emotion, now that the words she had been expecting were spoken, how much her nervous system had suffered in the long struggle she had fought out with such success. He tried to calm her, and loved and admired her all the more for her keen womanly feeling.

"Horrible, most horrible!" she murmured, her

eyes still hidden in her shaking hands. "But how do you know? Tell me all you know."

Then George told her without omission or reservation. She listened eagerly, greedily, and as the narrative proceeded she became quite calm. George dwelt on his astonishment that Routh had not made the discovery which had forced itself upon him, but Harriet disposed of that part of the matter in a moment.

"You forget," she said, "he was not in London. When you came to me, on your return from Amherst, do you not remember I told you Stewart was away, hiding from his creditors, poor fellow? He never heard of the murder very likely; he never interests himself in such horrors. Indeed, he never mentioned anything about it to me, and of course he must have known at once that the man was Deane. The very name of the tavern in the Strand where he was to have dined himself, would have suggested the idea."

"Precisely so," said George; "that was the thing which puzzled me so completely, and made me anxious to see him."

"The strangeness of the coincidence," said Harriet, "is as remarkable as the event is horrible. It only proves how mistaken are our notions of the laws of chance. What could be more wildly improbable than that, living in the midst of London, and within constant reach of the talk and speculation about it, Stewart and I should have known nothing of the matter?"

"Very extraordinary indeed," said George; "one of those facts which would be denounced as too unnatural, if they were told in fiction. And how unfortunate! What a terrible mystery Routh might have cleared up!"

"And yet," Harriet replied, with a furtive glance at Dallas, full of keen and searching expression, "what could he have told, beyond the fact that he had known the man under the name of Deane? After all, it comes to that, and to no more, doesn't it?"

"To no more, my dear Mrs. Routh? To a great deal more. When we tell the police what we know, there will be not only an identification of the body, but an explanation of the motive."

"I don't quite understand you," said Harriet; and as she spoke, there came a click in her throat, as there had come when she and George Dallas had last spoken together.

Would it ever be over? Should her purpose ever be gained?

"Don't you?" said George, surprised, "and you so quick, too. But no wonder you are upset by this; it is so dreadful when one has known the person, is it not? But you *will* see in a moment that our being able to depose to the large sum of money and the jewels in the poor fellow's possession will make the motive quite plain. They have got a notion now that he was a foreigner, and that the motive was political, whereas it was of course simply a robbery. He resisted, I suppose, and was killed in the scuffle."

"Does the report read like that?" asked Harriet, faintly.

"It simply says he was stabbed," said

George; "but it is plain that all the newspapers took up the political-murder notion at once, and then, of course, their reports would be made to fit their theory. No doubt some ruffian did it who knew that he had a large sum about him that day. Very likely he had been traced from the City; he had been there to get some securities. I can swear to his having told me that, at all events. How very ill you look, Mrs. Routh. This ghastly story has been too much for you. I don't think you ever liked poor Deane, but no one could know of a man's coming to such an untimely end, if he was ever such a bad fellow, and not feel it, especially you. I wish I had not said anything. It would have been better for Routh to have told you this."

"No, no," said Harriet. "Indeed it is better that I should hear it from you, and you are mistaken in supposing I am so much overcome entirely on account of—on account of—"

"The murder? Yes?" asked George, looking anxiously at her.

"It is all dreadful; no one in the world can feel it to be more dreadful than I do," said Harriet, earnestly.

As she spoke she rose from her chair, pushed her hair off her forehead, and began to walk slowly up and down the room. George sat still, following her with his eyes, and noting, in all his excitement and perturbation of spirit, the change which a few weeks had made in her appearance.

"I am grieved and troubled for you, George. I see in this serious results for you, and I think more of them."

"For me, Mrs. Routh? What can happen for me in this matter that has not already happened? My mother has suffered all she can suffer. Time may or may not restore her. Surely the follies and sins of my life have been heavily punished. Nothing can undo all this misery; but nothing can be added to it either. I have only to set the mystery at rest."

"Take care, George," said Harriet, earnestly; "I am not sure of that. Let us look at the case in all its bearings. Nothing that you have to tell can contradict the evidence given at the inquest, and which directs suspicion against you. You did dine with this wretched man; you did leave the tavern in his company; you did wear the coat to which the waiter swears."

"Ah, by-the-by," said George, "that was the coat I left at your house. Where is it, Mrs. Routh? It must be produced, of course."

He did not yet perceive that she was trying to shake his determination; but she answered his question with truly wonderful carelessness. "The coat; oh yes, I remember. You wrote to me about it. It must be here, of course, unless it has been lost in the flitting from South Molton-street. He tells me a lot of his things have gone astray."

"Well," said George, "that's easily found out. Pray go on, Mrs. Routh. You were saying—"

"I was saying, George, that when you put together all the strange coincidences in this matter which have led, naturally it must be

said, to such a conclusion as that the man who wore the coat which you bought at Amherst is the criminal whom the police want to arrest—I think you would find it very difficult to prove that you are not the man!”

“Good God! You are not serious,” cried George.

“I am perfectly serious,” she answered. “How can you prove it? How do I, at this moment, know in a manner which I could demonstrate to legal satisfaction that you are not the man who did the deed?”

George looked at her in astonishment.

“Of course *I do* know it—that is, I believe it, which is quite a different thing; but supposing I did not believe it, supposing my mind were not made up about it, how would you propose to rove it to me? Tell me that, and then the strength of my argument, the value of my advice, will become evident to you, I think.”

Still George looked at her, and his colour rose. He was unaccountably embarrassed by the question. The whole thing had appeared to him as simple for him as it was terrible for Deane, when Harriet began to speak. It bore a very different aspect now.

“I—I should prove that I parted with Deane, that night, at the door of the billiard-rooms where we had been playing.”

“Outside the door or inside, before witnesses or alone?” interrupted Harriet.

“Why, it certainly was outside the door, and we were alone.”

“Exactly. Then your having parted with him that night is just what you cannot prove; and as you cannot prove that, you can prove nothing. Let me repeat to you your own account of that night’s proceedings, and you will see that you can prove nothing to outweigh the presumptive evidence against you. You told me this wretched man had money about him which he boasted of; therefore, you knew he was a rich prey. You had no money—only a few shillings at least; you went to your lodgings that night, and left them without notice on the following morning, having paid your landlady with a ten-pound note that had been in this man’s possession. How can you account for that? You went to Amherst, where you remained, alone, under at feigned name, for four days; you returned to London, where, it can be proved, the occurrence was, at the time, a topic of general discussion, late at night. You went abroad the following morning, and at Amsterdam you offered certain valuable diamonds for sale. The diamonds are your mother’s, you say, and formed part of a bracelet given to you by her.”

“No, no,” said George; “I never would explain that under any circumstances.”

Harriet smiled, but the steadfast earnestness of her manner was not lessened by the smile, which was just a little contemptuous.

“That is precisely what you would be forced to explain,” she continued. “Certain diamond ornaments were among the articles in the possession of the murdered man, says the newspaper report,” she pointed to the passage with

a steady hand. He read it, and listened in silence, his face grave and anxious.

“You must account for the diamonds which you sold at Amsterdam; how are you to prove, otherwise, that they are not those the wretched man wore when he was seen in your company?”

“I remember his studs and his ring,” said George, in a low, agitated voice. “I wonder they have not been traced.”

Harriet did not reply for a moment; and the click in her throat was painfully hard and audible, as she said at length:

“They would have been broken up, of course; and remember, George, they were unset diamonds you sold at Amsterdam.”

George Dallas leaned his elbows on the table, and his head on his hands. He looked at Harriet, and her face changed when his gaze was removed—changed to a look of sharp, terrible anxiety, to all the intentness of one pleading in a desperate cause.

“You must tell the story of your visit to Amherst; you must tell the truth about your mother and the jewels; moreover, you must prove it. Can your mother do that for you?”

“No,” said George, dearly; “but my old nurse can.”

“How? Did she see you on the Friday, when you arrived at Amherst? Did she see you at all until the Monday? Could she swear you were at Amherst in the interval? And, supposing she could, what would it avail? Look here, George, this man’s body was found on Friday evening, the eighteenth of April, and the presumption is that it had been a night and a day in the river. Do you see what this means?” She put her hand on his shoulder, and grasped it securely. He shrunk from her light fingers; they hurt his flesh as though they had been steel bars. She struck the newspaper lying open on the table with the other hand, and said, with a desperate effort, “It means this, George: The man was found on Friday; but the deed was done on Thursday night—done, of course, after you left him; but who can prove that? He was seen alive in your company late on Thursday night, and he was never seen alive again. The hours of that night must be accounted for, George, if you are to prove yourself guiltless. How can you account for them after the time the waiter saw you leave the tavern together?”

George did not answer. She caught her breath and went on, fixing on him a sideway look of intense anxiety.

“Can any of the people at the billiard-rooms prove at what hour you left them? Can any one at your former lodgings prove at what hour you reached home that night?”

“I don’t think we left any one after us at the billiard-room but the marker,” George replied. “By the way, how extraordinary that he did not come forward at the inquest. He must have noticed Deane’s odd appearance, and his diamond studs and things, I should think.”

“One would think so,” said Harriet; “but I dare say the foreign look is commonly enough seen in such places. Still the coat must have

been very conspicuous. I forget whether you said you were in the habit of going to those particular billiard-rooms."

"I did not say anything about it, Mrs. Routh. I never was there but that once. It is very odd, as you say, about Deane's coat, but the poor man hadn't it on. After we left the tavern, I said it was an odd, un-English kind of coat, and too warm, I should think, for the weather; but he said he had 'the shakes' that day—Yankee for ague, you know—and had never worn it before in this country. He carried it over his arm, I remember, the cloth side out, and threw it into a corner of the billiard-room. I dare say no one saw it."

"Had he put it on when you parted with him?" asked Harriet.

"No," said George; "he was still carrying it over his arm, and I remember now that I said to him, 'You had better button that trapper's wrap of yours over all that money you've been staggering under the weight of.' 'Lightened a little, old fellow, by you,' he said, though he had paid his losses in a note, not in gold."

Harriet's face was less anxious now.

"Poor fellow!" George went on, with a slight shudder; "how dreadful it is—such light words, too, as we parted with. When he handed me the note, he asked for pen and ink, and wrote his name upon it, in full, over some initials—A. F., I think—and told me a queer story about an old lady who always endorsed her notes with her name, residence, and the date of her birth, and how he once traced a forgery by a bank-note, purporting to come from her, being devoid of those eccentric inscriptions. He was telling me the story as we went out."

George's discursive fancy had wandered from his own position to the circumstances which invested Deane's fate with additional sadness to his mind. Harriet frowned angrily at this proof of his invincibly light nature, and went on sharply:

"All this adds strength to my argument. But I asked you another question. Did any one in the house you lodged at know at what hour you went home that night? Is any one in a position to prove it?"

"No," said George. "I let myself in with a latch-key, and made no noise. I never did, when I could help it, there, the old woman was such a Tartar."

"Then there is not a flaw in my argument, George," she said, in a sweet, solemn tone, which, from the first time he had heard it, had had an irresistible charm for the young man; "there is nothing to be gained for any one, for any conceivable interest that you are bound to consider, for any interest, indeed, except the abstract one of the law, in telling what you know of this matter."

"The man's friends," remonstrated George, who, habitually submissive to her, did not recoil at the suggestion, as he would infallibly have recoiled had it come from any other person; "they may not know, they may be in suspense, in misery."

"I hardly think so," said Harriet, and her

blue eyes had their coldest colour, and her sweet voice its subtlest inflection of scorn. "Did you ever hear him mention relative or friend? Did you ever know a man so cold, so callous, so base, so shamelessly devoid of any interest save in his own pleasure or his own gain? Did you ever know one so narrow-hearted, so mean-spirited, of so crafty and cruel a nature?" Her energy quite startled George. She was looking straight before her, and her hand was raised as though she were tracing a picture as her mind produced it. "The man was a reptile, George—a cruel snake in his nature. I don't believe any one on earth ever loved him, except his mother in his babyhood. I hope she's dead; yes, I trust she's dead! And that you should peril your safety, drag your mother's name into the police-courts, arouse all the anger, stab all the pride, of your step-father, ruin, or at least greatly injure, your own prospects, by the revelations you will be forced to make, supposing (which, I confess, I think most difficult and improbable) you do prove your own innocence, seems to me utterly monstrous and irrational. Remember, you can give justice only negative assistance. If you prove that Deane was the victim, and you not the criminal, you can't tell them who the criminal is, or give them any information about Deane."

"No," said George, very quickly; "but then, you know, Routh can."

Harriet dropped her hand off his shoulder, and fell into a chair.

"You are overdone, Mrs. Routh," George said, tenderly, as he took her hand in his, and resumed his old manner of deferential affection. "You have talked too long and too much about this murder, and it has been too much for you. I ought to have seen that before. We won't say another word about it, until I have consulted Routh. How shocked he will be! I will think of all you have said; but I will do nothing to-day. I can't even wait to see him now, for I must get down to The Mercury office by four. I must leave you now."

"You are sure you will do nothing until we have seen you again?" Harriet said, faintly. "George, let nothing induce you to mention the matter at The Mercury. Only think of the god-send a hint would be to them."

"I'll take care," said George. "I will not stir in the matter till I have talked it over thoroughly with you."

"You will stay here, George, of course," said Harriet, kindly, holding out her hand, but without rising. "We have a room at your disposal now, you know."

"Thank you, Mrs. Routh, I will; but I don't think I shall be more than a day or two in London, unless I should be detained by this sad business."

"Are you going back to Amsterdam?" asked Harriet.

"No," said George; "I am going to my mother."

"I was right," Harriet said, when she was alone, as she lay back in her chair, pale and ex-

hausted. "I thought the one strong motive, the motive which, though late aroused, has been strong enough to save George Dallas from himself, would be powerful now. Twice his mother has helped, has saved, at his expense, his worst, his involuntary enemy. There was nothing else to work upon, but that has succeeded."

Harriet was right to a certain extent, but not quite right. Another motive had helped the end she desired to gain, and George named it to his own heart as he walked down to The Mercury office by the name of Clare Carruthers.

"You are a wonderful woman, Harry," said Routh, when Harriet had concluded the brief statement into which she condensed her report of the interview between herself and George. But, though he spoke in a tone of strong admiration, and his face relaxed into a look of intense relief, he did not hold her in his arms and kiss her passionately now. "You are a wonderful woman, and this danger is escaped."

She smiled a little bitterly, very sadly, as she said:

"I don't know. At all events, it is once more tided over."

JONATHAN MARTIN.

ACCIDENT brought before me, the other day, an extraordinary picture, which I received from the hands of Jonathan Martin, at the time of his confinement in York City Jail. It represents the vision which he assured me had induced him to set fire to the Minster, and has recalled to my mind—what may not be unworthy of record—some of the extraordinary hallucinations associated with Jonathan Martin's history. He died in Bedlam, where, as also during his incarceration in the Castle at York, I had opportunities of conversing with him.

The emphatic eulogium may be deemed extravagant which a great authority has pronounced on his brother, John Martin the painter, as "the meekest, the most lofty, the most permanent, the most original genius of his age," his works exhibiting "the divine intoxication of a great soul lapped in majestic and unearthly dreams," the representation of "the most august and authentic inspiration;"* yet some of the characteristics which undoubtedly distinguished John may be traced in a coarser, wilder, and more extravagant shape in the thoughts and words and works of Jonathan. He was, I believe, a tanner by trade. He became a popular Dissenting preacher. No Covenanters, no Cameronians, ever pursued Episcopacy with a bitterer hatred and more impassioned denunciations than he. All the anathemas that Luther directed against the Church of Rome, Jonathan inflicted on the Church of England. Its supposed abuses aroused his soul to very frenzy. He was willing to encounter and even to welcome death, as the reward of his courageous protests against what he deemed "the abomination of abomina-

tions." Schemes for exhibiting God's "wrath and vengeance" upon those he denounced constantly floating in his mind. He made no secret of his antipathies, though he did not divulge his plans of operation, fearing he might be thwarted in his purposes. In carrying out these plans, no hesitation or infirmity of purpose could arrest his hand or divert his mind; and if for a moment some scruples of conscience presented themselves, they were solved by a sort of logical process somewhat too common even among those who, though not mad as Jonathan was mad, yet see the hand of Deity leading them in their very wanderings, and find a warrant for their own aberrations in the reflection that "God moves in a mysterious way," like that in which they presume they are called upon to move. Not a shadow of doubt troubled Jonathan's mind as to his right to denounce, and his mission to punish, ecclesiastical wickedness. If ever there were a reasoning lunatic, it was he.

All that I am about to record I received from the lips of Jonathan Martin. His mode of expression was vehement, his language rude and unpolished—I think it had the Northumbrian twang—he was dogmatical and peremptory, as if he spoke with authority; indeed, if there were anything of which he was truly convinced, it was that he was a special instrument appointed by God to do great works—works too great to be committed to any but the most highly privileged exponents of the Divine will. He once said to me in prison, "Is there any one, from the king on his throne to the lowest of the people, who is not thinking of and speaking of Jonathan Martin; and would this be so, unless Jonathan Martin had to do what can be done by nobody but myself?" No apprehension of consequences, no fear of punishment, ever entered into his mind, except as an encouragement to carry out his designs. "What can they do," he said, "if they do their worst? They can do nothing except to accomplish the purpose of God." One of the earliest and most remarkable observations of Jonathan's intellect was the reasoning unreason (the Spanish call it *sinrazon**) with which he persuaded himself that for the purpose of promoting church reform he was called upon to murder a bishop. He told me that a succession of heavenly visitors had appeared to him at night, and communicated a mandate from God the Father that he should destroy some right reverend prelate. He had no personal resentments to indulge, and therefore his conscience freed him from the charge of malice prepense. He had been offended by the intrusive and imposing character of the cathedral, as it towers over the Lincolnshire flats, and determined that the bishop of that see should be the first example of the Divine judgment. "I was asleep," he said, "when an angel appeared to me—a smiling angel—he had a bow in his hand, a quiver with arrows on his back. He looked kindly and

* England and the English, chapter ix.

* La razon de la sinrazon qui con razon si urge Cervantes.

tenderly towards me, and having said, 'Jonathan! shoot the bishop!' he disappeared. I was a good deal perplexed and embarrassed. I did not like the suggestion. I thought I might be deceived. I did nothing, and I said nothing to anybody, but I still felt that the angel had been instructed to point out my duty to me. That day I went, as usual, to my work. I felt much disquieted. I did not wish to be 'disobedient to the heavenly vision,' but the command did not seem very peremptory. I thought it would be followed by something more decisive, and so it was; for when I fell asleep at night, after much restlessness and many tossings and turnings on my bed, the angel again appeared, but he did not smile—he looked melancholy and disappointed. I fancied he had come to reproach me for my hesitations and doubts. He shook his head mournfully; he held his bow in his left hand, took an arrow from his quiver, and, in a voice that had more in it of sorrow than of anger, said, 'Jonathan! Jonathan! Shoot the bishop!' and then quitted my presence. This second vision added greatly to my distress. I asked myself whether I should consult my wife to help me in my uncertainty, but in a case between God and my conscience I thought it better to keep what had taken place to myself. Though I found my purpose somewhat strengthened by this second manifestation of the Divine will, there was still an unwillingness to do the deed. I took out a pistol which I had in my room, and loaded it; but I resolved upon nothing then. I passed another miserable day. I wanted to do what was right—I was afraid of doing what was wrong; and another night came, without my settling what was to be the result of the struggle between my mortal weakness and the desire to obey what appeared more and more clearly a heavenly command. On the third night, however, the angel's visitation took quite another character. There was no smile of satisfaction, there was no expression of sorrow; but the angel appeared with terrible frowns on his countenance, and looked at me with indignant anger and displeasure. I had never seen anything so dreadful as the glance he hurled at me. It was no longer 'Jonathan!' softly uttered; no longer 'Jonathan! Jonathan!!' with the confiding, inquiring emphasis of the second greeting; but 'Jonathan! Jonathan!! Jonathan!!!' falling on my ears like a voice of thunder. The angel held the bow in his hand—bent the string at full tension, and the arrow was placed as if ready to be launched. 'Jonathan! Shoot the bishop!' was again repeated, and the angel, amidst a crash which seemed to shake my bed and make the whole building totter to its foundations, vanished out of my sight. This seemed so manifest and irresistible an announcement from above, that most of my scruples were removed, and I then confided to my wife that it was my purpose to obey the Lord's commands. I knelt down and prayed earnestly in something like these words: 'O Lord God, I have listened to Thy message and am ready to do

Thy will. Yet I would pray Thee for one more, one final manifestation. When I lay down to rest, I will place the loaded pistol on the table; if I have misunderstood Thy orders, remove the pistol from the table where it shall be placed, and I then shall know that it is Thy will that the bishop should be spared, and he shall be spared; but if on awaking I find the pistol on the table, I shall be sure that I am doing Thy behest, and I undoubtedly will shoot the bishop.'

"But, Jonathan," said I, interrupting him here, "you are familiar with the Scriptures. You know the commandments. Did you not find this: 'Thou shalt do no murder'?"

"Yes! I did, and that commandment somewhat perplexed me. Was it not given by Moses? But don't you know, and does not everybody know, that more is to be learnt from men's works than from their words? And I studied the history of Moses, attending less to what he said than to what he did. And did he not slay the Egyptian? And was not this my warrant for slaying the bishop?"

Jonathan told his wife in confidence what he had now determined to do. She went to a magistrate, who issued a warrant for her husband's arrest. Jonathan was sent to prison, and the bishop escaped his intended doom.

He was placed in a cell with a brick floor, which had been lately scrubbed with pumice-stone, a fragment of which had been scraped down to a sharp edge, and was left in one of the corners. The door was strongly bolted and locked; the windows had iron frames; even the funnel of the chimney was protected by bars of iron. Yet with that small unnoticed piece of pumice-stone Jonathan managed to cut through the bars placed across the chimney, and with the dexterity of a sweep made his way up to the top, whence he descended to the ground to give further effect, but in a form altogether new, to the anathemas he had been pouring out against the Anglican establishment. He knelt down outside the jail, thanked God for his deliverance, confirmed in his conviction that he was a special instrument in the hands of Providence to accomplish some great design. He made his way to York.

He wrote—it was vilely written and strangely misspelt; for Jonathan wrote like a half-instructed schoolboy, and spelt as ill as he wrote—a fierce denunciation against the church and the clergy, declaring that a day of vengeance was at hand, and that a terrible display of the wrath of God would be soon witnessed in that archiepiscopal city, and on that very building. This document he signed with his own hand "Jonathan Martin," and himself pasted against the principal door of the Minister. He entered the cathedral with the crowd of worshippers, took his part in the services, and, when the congregation dispersed, hid himself behind one of the monuments and waited for the closing of the doors. He had with him neither match nor tinder, nor any seeming means of incendiarism. Had he been seized and searched, no evidence of an evil intention

would have been found upon his person. He had nothing about him but a pocket-knife.

The cathedral being cleared of all worshippers, except the incendiary who watched the beadle as he went his rounds, but was not discovered in his place of retreat, Jonathan wandered about, and declared that he found a hard piece of stone, sufficient to strike a light from his penknife, and that the only thing wanted was some tinder which might catch the spark he was about to kindle. In his search he went into the organ-loft, where he discovered some sheets of old rotten music which he thought would answer his purpose; and so they did. Having obtained a spark by a blow given to the stone by the back of the knife, he lighted paper, laid on more of the decayed leaves upon it, blew them into a flame, and gradually deposited upon it and around it all the music and other books he found there. The fire extended to the wooden loft, and when Jonathan had satisfied himself that the work was done, he went into the belfry, seized one of the bell-ropes, and by its aid escaped into the open country, through a window of the cathedral which had been left open. He said he did not look back for some time; but when he did, he saw the flames bursting through the roof of the Minster, and then knelt down and uttered praises to God, in that He had "selected me and helped me to do a work" which would redound so much to His glory, and give such a lesson to the careless and unconverted crowd.

The result is known. The organ-loft was consumed, and serious damage—afterwards repaired at an immense cost—was done to the sacred edifice. As to the identity of the incendiary there could not be a shadow of a doubt; the thing was "not done in a corner." The guilty one had written out his own indictment. He avowed and triumphed in his guilt.

Great was the indignation of the archiepiscopal city, laudably proud as it has ever been of one of the grandest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture. Clergy and laity agreed that no punishment could be too severe for a criminal who had, to the crime of destroying the beautiful structure, added the insult of justifying and boasting of his iniquitous deed. Defence there was none; doubt there was none. Jonathan was thrown into the castle jail, and "Hang him! hang him!" was echoed through every alley, lane, street, square, of York.

I then visited Jonathan in his prison cell. He was not serene, but triumphant. He was certain that all would work together for good—for his own good and for that of his country and of mankind. He was as vain of his exploits as if he had redeemed a race from slavery, or won the most glorious of victories. "I was nobody, and am now more talked about than anybody. Who is there in the land who is not occupied with the name and the deeds of Jonathan Martin? His name was known to nobody; it is now known to everybody. The king is now speaking about me." And he rubbed his hands with delight, and his eyes sparkled with fire, and then he talked of his coming trial. "What is

to happen? I may be acquitted. What then? I shall know that I am preserved for, and appointed to, some greater work. God has yet something for me to do, and it will be done. Or, they may find me guilty. They may be too blind to perceive the truth. I may be condemned to be hanged. What then? Sent to heaven only a little the sooner. That, perhaps, may be God's purpose." So excited, however, was the public mind in York, so determined to punish the miscreant who had fired the temple, that nothing but capital punishment appeared likely to satisfy the call which demanded the utmost rigour of the law. It was believed that there was too much method in Jonathan's doings to allow them to be treated as acts of madness. The population seemed as frenzied as Jonathan himself had ever been; but at this time he was perhaps the man the least impassioned of the whole population.

Some friends, who felt interest in the poor demented man, had him properly defended. I think Henry Brougham was selected, and he successfully urged the plea of lunacy. Jonathan was committed to Bedlam, there to be confined for the term of his natural life. The verdict was a great disappointment to him. It denied to him the glory of martyrdom, and delayed his heavenly reward. He regarded the attempts of those who sought to save him from the hands of the executioner as a feeble and needless effort to obstruct the high purposes of Heaven. He thought the motives of his friends might be good, and did not blame them for having very imperfect and erroneous ideas of duty in interrupting the course of justice. If condemned, he should interpret the condemnation as a proof that his work was done, and that he was called to his heavenly home to receive his well-deserved reward. If he were acquitted, it would be to render yet nobler services before his mortal race was run. These were the two strings in his harp of consolation, whose music seemed divine.

In a moment of confidence Jonathan told me he would paint for me a picture of the vision which had induced him to set fire to the Minster—which he did, and presented it to me. It is drawn in Indian ink, and, though rude, it is a "fine imagining." The base is a dark rolling cloud, pierced through by a fiery sword; on the sword a sort of circular shield is placed, in whose centre is the head of God the Father. The expression is of terrible majesty; the eyes are fierce, the mouth is open, as if issuing a divine command. Beneath it is the inscription:

That's the Sord I am the Hand,
That's the Clud that God command;
This is the Sord I saw in a vision at nounday,
This is the Clud I saw on the Minestra.

Jonathan Martin. York, C.G., Aper the 15, 1829,
his two visions.

The original has lost much of its distinctness. In the wreck of the Alma it lay for some days in the bituminous waters of the Red Sea; but I

have a copy, made at the time, which is a tolerably fair reproduction of the drawing.

I visited Jonathan Martin after he was removed to Bedlam. He remembered what had taken place at York, and said, all that he had ever done, or thought of doing, was as nothing to that which he was now commissioned to do. He talked of blood, of the field of Armageddon, and it was clear his was to be the hand that was "to pour out the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God." "Not since men were upon the earth" had anything so dreadful been seen or heard as the deed he was about to accomplish. It was to bring about all the denunciations contained in the sixteenth chapter of Revelations. I asked him what he meant to do. He answered, "You must wait till you see." I reported to the authorities that he was contemplating something terrible, and required to be specially watched.

Shortly afterwards, Jonathan Martin died.

INTERNATIONAL FISHERY-MEETING.

THERE are two things which inevitably follow the railway, wherever it goes—at least in Europe—namely, gas and fish. To the stay-at-home Englishman, the persistent companionship which those luxuries keep up with the iron track is less striking than it is to the continental traveller, especially in the case of the first of the two. Coal, with us, is so widely dispersed and of such comparatively easy transport, that there are few even small country towns in England which are not illuminated by its brilliant flame. On the Continent, when you branch off from the railway by Diligence, you mostly exchange the light of gas for the darkness visible of oil.

The same is true with regard to fish. At least, after the commencement of the coaching period, during which, although fish might be scarce in the Midland Counties and of uncertain quality in summer, still it was a possibility. People knew what cod and skate and soles were, and enjoyed them highly when they got them. The supply now is regular, good, and abundant; but the great change effected in England has been rather a question of price than of fish or no fish. The produce of our seas has been dispersed over a larger area, and prices have been equalised throughout that area. Dwellers along the seaboard suffer most from a scarcity of fish. Some of my readers may remember, like myself, the time when, along certain parts of the coast, four fine fresh mackerel were occasionally to be had for a penny. Those seasons of local plenty are gone, never to return, until the exhaustion of our coal-fields. Still it does seem hard for the inhabitant of a fishing-town, who wants a turbot, to be obliged to order it back from London.

On the Continent, the difficulty of getting sea-fish used to be something like proportional to the square of the distance. If oysters, when they reached our George the First, still resi-

dent in Hanover, were already so "high" that his Majesty, after removing to London, found our best natives insipid and flavourless—they had to be kept several days to please the royal palate—in what state must shell and other fish have been when, and if, it reached the cities of Central Europe?

At the present day, when a train can fit from sea to sea in six-and thirty hours or less, sea-fish stare you in the face in the most unexpected localities. You are surprised with delicious mussels at Tours. At Lyons you are served with mackerel or anything else of its class you like to call for. A few weeks ago, a fishmonger at Berne exhibited in his shop a live sea crawfish. It must have been an early specimen, for such crowds gathered to stare at the monster that he closed his shutters to avoid further inconvenience. The consequence is, that in the second half of our century, inland people ate enormously more fish than they did in the first, while dwellers near the coast still consume a considerable quantity, though at a higher cost than formerly. The rich still get their wants supplied; the poor have to put up with a scanty share. Which is a pity.

The wholesome, nay, restorative results of varying a meat and vegetable diet with fish need here be only hinted at. The wonders worked by cod-liver oil, which are equally attainable by feeding on the cod itself and its liver; the beneficial effects of the phosphates in oysters, rendering them an object of craving with many invalids; the specific action of iodine on scrofulous complaints; and the source whence iodine is obtained—the sea—are instances in point.

Although gas, by following the rail, may perhaps eventually run short, it is not so, and never will be so, with sea-fish. River-fish, in thickly peopled countries, must be carefully guarded, tended, and overseen by fry-herds and fish-keepers; but the fecundity of Ocean knows no limits. We may take and eat all we *can* take, without fear or scruple. We need not abstain, through economical motives. It is not man who will depopulate the seas. A full-grown cod, or an adult seal, has consumed more fish than the most fish-dinner-loving of his eaters or his flayers. The grand alimentary problem now before Western Europe is, how to catch, cure, and distribute more, more, and still more, sea-fish.

We (the nations of North-West Europe) are most happily situated for the purpose. The United Kingdom has the two Channels (the English and St. George's), the German Ocean, and the Atlantic, for her fish-ponds. France has her three seas, the Channel, the Ocean, and the Mediterranean. The North Sea lies open to Norway and Holland; while Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden skirt the Baltic—a sea enjoying the double advantage of being both cool and only moderately salt.

Waters too salt are adverse to the fattening and thriftiness of fish, probably also to their increase—witness the pitting of oysters and mussels, the ascent of rivers by fish to de-

posit their spawn, and a score of other familiar facts. Warm seas produce but poor-fleshed fish. Maury even tells us that the fish of the sea afford perhaps the best indication as to the cold currents in it. The Atlantic cities and towns of America owe their excellent fish-markets to the stream of cold water from the north, which runs along the coast. The temperature of the Mediterranean is four or five degrees above the ocean temperature of the same latitude; and the fish there are mostly indifferent. On the other hand, the temperature along the American coast is several degrees below that of the ocean, and from Maine to Florida tables are supplied with the most excellent of fish. The sheep's-head of this cold current, so much esteemed in Virginia and the Carolinas, loses its flavour and is considered worthless when taken on the warm coral-banks of the Bahamas. The same is the case with other fish. In the cold water of that coast, they are delicious; in the warm water on the other edge of the Gulf Stream, their flesh is soft and unfit for table.

A cold-watered country, rich in first-rate fish, has recently set the example of comparing what rhymesters call "the finny prey." Bergen, in Norway, opened, in 1865, an International Fisheries Exhibition, original in design and spirited in execution; this year, Boulogne-sur-Mer has given the idea still fuller development, and illustrating amply not merely the catching of, but everything that has reference to, salt-water or fresh-water fish.

The Boulogne Exposition Internationale de Pêche is extremely attractive to the eye. It is interesting to the mind also, exciting curiosity and inviting inquiry. Many of the objects exhibited are as new to the educated as to the illiterate public; and it is both socially and commercially important. It is, moreover, eminently international.

For the holding of such an Exhibition, Boulogne is particularly fortunate in her central position amidst the grand community of fishermen. This year, she is also favoured by circumstances. Having recently erected a new covered fish-market, containing two noble halls and their appendages, she handsels them with this admirable display before yielding them up to the dealers in fish. Such an opening will doubtless bring good luck with it. But the crowning element of success is to be found in the intelligent spirit and the perfect courtesy displayed by the gentlemen connected with the undertaking; among whom I am bound to signalise the name of Monsieur Edmond Magnier, the Adjoint Secretary.

On the quay, near the bridge leading to the railway station, is a bronze statue of Edward Jenner, the discoverer of vaccination, who for a while resided in Boulogne. Facing this statue, the new Halle aux Poissons occupies an irregular plot of ground. You enter by the passage through which fish will be carted into the wholesale market; and here, at the outset, M. Boucher de Perthes meets you with a retrospective collection of the flint

arms and weapons found in the gravel-pits of Abbeville and Amiens. There is also a bit of an ancient net; there are stone weights for nets, and models of fishhooks made of thorns, employed from the remotest antiquity. Primeval fishermen seem to have had no metal whatever. Afterwards, while metals were still rare, our ancestors of the age of bronze and the beginning of the age of iron employed polished stone and the bones of animals for every available purpose. And now, although the Greenlanders have iron, they use it with the utmost economy. In the interesting series sent by the Copenhagen Ethnographical Society, most of the objects are ornamented with bone. There is a barbed harpoon made of bone, a barbed trident entirely of the same material, and a lance of bone and iron combined. The Swedes, who fish the lakes Aniucen and Ouernern, ballast their nets with bones.

The contents of the Exhibition are, first, the fishes themselves, preserved in spirits. Most of these are contributed by the Museum of Bergen. From England, Mr. Buckland has sent a series of eight specimens showing the development of salmon, from the egg to a year old, when ready to go to sea as a smolt. He also shows a new ornamental fresh-water fish, the "gold schley," from Germany (of the colour of the gold fish, with a few dark spots, and resembling the red mullet in shape), recently introduced to England by the Acclimatisation Society. Among the series are young herring, in various stages, from four to twenty-eight weeks old, proving, by comparison, what our Yarrel taught us, that whitebait are *not* baby-herring, but a distinct species. The cod series, too, is curious. It consists of cod-roe, nearly arrived at maturity; roe artificially fecundated, three or four hours, eleven or twelve hours, two or three days, a week, sixteen days, after spawning. These are illustrated by magnified drawings. In the last, the young fish are fully developed and ready to burst the shell. And then come the minutest of codlings, caught on the surface of the sea, in the finest of nets, in different stages of development, until they may be considered capable of going alone and taking care of themselves, for which they are blessed with a capital appetite. On buying a whole cod, it is always worth while to see what curiosities its stomach contains. On one such occasion, I found a black puppy dog; the fishmonger, who presided over the operation, had taken the knife which performed it out of the stomach of another codfish.

To estimate the value of this raw material, we have only to remember that fish are the grand restorers of human wastefulness in respect to what we allow to flow into the sea. With them are brought back to land valuable elements which man allows the land to become exhausted of. And so here we have the taper eel, the glittering sprat, the dingy coal-fish, the spotted plaice, herring of divers local varieties, showing the kinds peculiar to certain fishing-grounds. There is the speckled trout of different ages, three, four, and five years old;

there are cockles, clams or sand-mussels (*Mya arenaria*); crabs, lobsters, and prawns, au naturel, in their unboiled state; there are fish, male and female, showing that, as a general rule, the gentleman is long and slender, while the lady is short and stout. There is an infant dolphin, seeing that a full-grown fellow would be rather inconvenient to bottle, and there are adult mackerel of royal aspect. A noble salmon, from the Baltic, makes one wonder how *he* would taste—as the New Zealander said of the missionary—if taken out of his alcoholic pickle.

Fish are peculiarly unfortunate in offering a double motive for their destruction. They are caught on account of their own culinary merits, and they are caught to lure other fish to their death. Every marine creature, and every part of it, serves as bait; exemplified especially by cuttle-fish, mussels (scraped from the bottom of the sea by an iron drag with a bag behind it), sand-eels, which burrow like a mole before you have time to lay a finger on them, and that strong-stomached worm, the *Arenicola piscatorum*, which thrives and fattens by swallowing an unlimited allowance of sand.

Sponges are self-manufactured products of the sea, the main difficulty being to get them. The same may be said of oysters; because whoever is unable to open an oyster is deficient in one of the arts of civilised life. For those who cannot—and such persons do exist—there are oyster-opening machines of irresistible action. Give me, however, the human hand, which neither spills the juice nor tears the flesh. The natural history of oysters, or rather of oyster-shells, is illustrated by Mr. Frank Buckland in a curious series from England, Ireland, Scotland, France, America. We have young oysters, or spat, from one to three weeks old; from nine to fourteen months; from one to one year and a half old, when it is called brood; from two to three years, also brood. At from three to six years old they attain the rank of natives, being fully developed and fit for market. Sheppy Island sends its hem or ham oysters, and the Ile de Ré its specimens of oyster-breeding. Oysters are seen adhering to various substances, living and dead: as pottery, porcelain, glass, welks, and other shell-fish. Sections of oyster-shell show its laminated structure; pearl oysters from Ceylon and Panama display the lustre of its internal surface.

Seaweeds, too, may claim a place among the results of fishing. There is not a single poisonous seaweed, while many are nutritious and restorative. They render us enormous indirect service by affording pasture to legions of living creatures which supply food to fish, who are food for men. They gave soda, until we learned how to make it from salt. Of marine algae, there are excessively beautiful collections, some adhering to paper, "nature-printed," looking more like exquisite paintings of seaweeds than the realities themselves. This impression is heightened by the (perhaps too) formal regularity of their arrangement. Others are dried and gouped, and so framed under convex glasses, forming charming bouquets to keep and admire as souvenirs of the Channel coast.

Among the elements of fishing may be fairly included books and journals descriptive of fish and their ways. The *Fishes of Scandinavia* appear in coloured plates. Widegren sends his *Researches on the Salmonidæ of Sweden*. Mr. Buckland's *Fish-Culture* attracts the inquiring eye, as also does his weekly natural-history paper, *Land and Water*.

Another category consists of marine products which have undergone preparation of some kind or other, overwhelming us with the abundance of its riches. Cod-liver oil alone makes a brilliant display; and in saying cod-liver, we must also include the livers of ling, dog-fish, and others. It is of every shade intermediate between Guinness's stout and the palest amber. The brown quality passes through light brown and yellow, until it reaches what is called the white quality, liquefied by steam. This article is contributed by Norway with special liberality. Pyramids and temples of cod-liver oil exhibit its various shades and hues, in flat bottles to show its clearness, in round bottles to display the depth of its colour.

But we have not yet done with cod. The northern nations especially manifest both its abundance and the store they set by it. In preparing it, they observe the utmost economy. Nothing is allowed to be wasted. For salting, the fish is decapitated. In the midst of such plenty, improvident people would throw the heads away; not so the North Sea fishermen. In the first place, the tongues—not so well known in England as they deserve to be, our experience being mainly limited to the sound, or swimming-bladder, which is taken from the *body* of the fish—the tongues and their roots are cut out and salted separately. And for these processes different qualities of salt are employed. The cheek-pieces—the white lump of muscle on each side of the head—are carefully taken out, salted, and dried separately; also the two delicate bits of meat at the back or nape of the fish's neck. The fins are dried, to furnish glue. B. Lundgreen, of Drontheim, sends salted cods' roes, of 1866, première qualité; Hans Clausen, of Christiansund, sends sounds and stomachs.

From her dried cod Norway also makes fish meal (fish meal, farine de poisson). While writing this, I am nibbling a biscuit made of fish flour. Bordevich and Co., of Lofoten, in Norway, sell extra fine fish meal at less than tenpence the pound avoirdupois. The bones and skin and all other useless portions, taken out before the grinding, are likewise carefully utilised, dried, and minced fine into fish guano, of whose fertilising effects learned professors give most flattering certificates. Agriculturists inclined to make the experiment may order it of Det norske Fiskeguanoselskabs Direction i Christiania (la Direction de la Société du guano de poisson de Norvège à Christiania).

Other good things, prepared and dried for transport and future use, are mussel-powder (muslingnuddler) and lobster-powder (hummernuddler), the latter especially serviceable for sauce, on emergencies. How often has the frantic cook exclaimed, "Here's the turbot, but where's

the lobster for sauce?" Norway helps you to a lobster handier than the fatted fowl in a hen-coop. It is of little use, however, to discover the existence of unknown alimentary materials, unless the knowledge is also acquired how to make them presentable and palatable. Therefore, steep cods' tongues thirty-six hours, changing the water once; boil ten minutes, throwing them into *boiling* water; serve covered with egg-sauce and garnished with toast. Or, boil and let cool, and then fry to a nice brown with egg and bread-crumbs. Or, with them instead of sounds, execute Dr. Kitchener's recipe for cod-sound pie. Or, use them instead of calf's head to make mock-turtle, helping out the thickening with fish-flour, and adding the indispensable seasonings and glass of Madeira.

The Lofoten fish-flour does not need unsalting, but only a steeping in milk for a couple of hours. In a dry place, it will keep a year. In fish soups it is excellent—I speak from experience—as well as in others, here soup for instance, which many cooks heighten with a dash of anchovy. The Christiania Society's recipe for a pudding for eight or ten persons is: a pint and a half of fish-flour, half a pint of potato arrowroot, half a pint of pounded biscuit, six or seven eggs, half a pint of sweet cream, and two ounces of butter. The fish-flour should be put into cold water in the afternoon of the day before, and then carefully strained away. The eggs and the cream to be well beaten separately. But this cook's oracle, with consistent ambiguity, omits to say whether the pudding should be boiled or baked. Try baking first.

Of stock fish and their fellows, there is no end. Dried ling, of eel-like proportions, might serve for edible walking-sticks. Other ling, white and semi-transparent, are spread out, like butter-flies. Dried skate retain as posthumous ornaments their long tail and their double jaws. Lapland dries even fresh-water fish: as pike. Sweden's salt haddock, Scotland's salt herring, Holland's dried flat-fish, and Norland's flynder (dried Northland flounders), emit each their peculiar perfume. France shows magnificent salted mackerel: a preparation worth attention: and little known in England. They are also smoked, imitating kipper salmon.

More complicated and highly-finished articles are the Boulogne small herring preserved in oil; potted sprats, smelling savoury, and calling to mind a story in Mrs. Opie's *White Lies*; the *Prima Delikatess-Anjorin*, from A. M. Rybergs, of Stockholm; pickled mussels of golden hue; and essence of crab. Besides fresh salmon and rodfisk (*Sebastus norvegicus*), Mr. Thame, of Drontheim (pronounce Thronthjem), sends snow-hen, or ptarmigan, roast or boiled, at the moderate price of two francs each per box, besides Norsk kaviar. And then there are from Heimerdinger's, of Hamburg, fresh-water crawfish tails, sturgeon's flesh, smoked salmon in oil, pickled eel, potted lamprey, and a host of other dainties *not* for the million.

But before we can enjoy these delicate delights—and the sturgeon-roe caviare alone would suffice to inspire a gastronomic lyric—we must

catch our fish. For which purpose, we are treated to nets and engines of such ingenuity, power, sweep, and destructiveness, that the wonder is, that, with all these appliances, *any* fish, scaly or shelly, escape and survive to continue their species. There are rakes, like extra-strong garden-rakes, with receptacles appended, to hold whatever their teeth displace. There are wire and wicker drums, or traps, for the inveigling of lobsters, crabs, and eels. There are purse-nets big enough to catch a Patagonian family; bag-nets, trawl-nets, casting-nets, seine-nets; single, double, and multiple nets, nets of cotton, hemp, and flax, besides enormous labyrinthine nets vast enough to entrap a wandering shark.

These nets are variously floated and weighted, according to the opportunities enjoyed by their owners; floated with pine-wood, cork, inflated skins, and blown-glass buoys; ballasted with weights of burnt clay, of stone wrapped in birch-bark, and of metal, the local material predominating. Thus, Norway has wooden rings to her sails. To fabricate the nets we have fibres, threads, twines, cords, yards, ropes, of all colours, sizes, and consistencies, tanned and untanned, tight and lax, fine-spun, loose-twisted. The effigy of a woman spins them at a wheel like that used by our grandmothers; and Jouannin and Co.'s netting-machine (sold to an English purchaser) nets ever so many bobbins at once, making its meshes with the very same knot as that executed by human fingers.

Fish are also caught by lines, horizontal, perpendicular, and at every angle between the two. There are even automaton fishing-lines, acting by clockwork. The hooks to garnish these vary in size from hooks that might hold a half-grown minnow to such as would land a hippopotamus; besides mechanical hooks, shining flat hooks baited with red cloth, silver-fish hooks, hooks with chains, spinning-hooks, hooks crosswise, star-grouped hooks, centipede hooks, hooks like Prince of Wales's feathers, and hooks arranged on hooks by thousands. Add to these, eel-spears, harpoons, light-holders for flambeau fishing, blubber-knives, razors for shaving whales to the quick—and there is enough to make the fish of the sea quake and tremble in their scales.

To catch fish, people go in boats; so we have numerous and beautiful models of boats, slipper-shaped, shuttle-shaped, scuttle-shaped, sharp at both ends, blunt at one end, blunt at both ends; long-boats, jolly-boats, luggers, yawls, row-boats, sailing-boats, life-boats, boats for Lapland lakes, skin boats for Greenland seas, wicker boats or coracles for Welsh trout-streams.

When the fish are caught, they have to be cured, preserved, packed, and disposed of; so there are barrels holding from a quart to many multiples of quarts; boats and boxes for keeping fish alive; machines for salting herring; fireplaces and cooking-stoves for boats; fish-caldrons big enough to boil Falstaff in, or make a stew of Daniel Lambert. Artistic models show us how fish are cured in quantity, and how they are preserved in ice. The

"ishus" indeed appears to render as important service to the Norwegian fisheries as it does to the Scotch.

All this is only a sample of the treasures contained in the Boulogne Exhibition, which is a great success. Its object has been to enable fishermen to compare foreign methods and customs with their own, and to derive instruction from the comparison. Printed accounts, reports, journals, reach maritime people slowly, and make but a slight impression when they do attract their notice. Minds uninfluenced by the clearest descriptions, will be convinced by the sight of things themselves and their practical results. In this light the Boulogne collection supplies a complete course of public teaching, addressing itself to every class—to scientific experimenters—pisciculturists and oyster-growers—as well as to unlettered sailors, and fishermen bound by the trammels of routine. Its importance is still further increased by its concerning the interests of merchants, shipowners, and capitalists in general, not to mention the nursing of future navies and the feeding of future generations.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE ASSASSINATION OF MR. PERCIVAL.

THE session of the year in which Wellington took Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo, and in which Napoleon retreated from Moscow, was an eventful one from its very commencement.

In the afternoon of May 19, 1812, the lobby of the House of Commons was full of noisy politicians, discussing the recent grant of one hundred thousand pounds a year to the new Regent, the probabilities of a war with America, the extravagance of the new Park to which the Prince had given his name, the outrages of the Luddites, the prospects of Lord Castlereagh succeeding the Marquis Wellesley as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and the more than likelihood of Wellington again retiring to the Portuguese frontier. Old politicians were lamenting the deaths of Pitt and Fox (1805-6); grievance-mongers were button-holding impatient M.P.s; place-hunting constituents were seeking their victims with the pertinacity of harriers that have lost their hare; men with claims, real or imaginary, on government (one among them especially brooding, soured, and malignant), were watching the opening doors. Through the crowd, unnoticed but by habitués of the House, passed Mr. Dundas, Viscount Palmerston, the Earl of Liverpool, Lord Mulgrave, and other members of the cabinet; but the prepossessing, courteous Premier had either not appeared or was hidden by the crowd round the door. That shrewd, hard-working, adroit man would soon be there, if he had not already come, and his followers and partisans were waiting, eager for his coming, and ardent for the debate, in which the Premier would calmly oppose the Catholic claims, or resist any more extended prosecution of the Peninsular war.

A slight murmur, at about a quarter past

five, at last announced the long-expected minister. At that very moment the sharp ringing report of a pistol at the entrance of the lobby startled every one, both in the hall and in the adjacent committee-rooms. There arose a cry of

"Murder—murder!"

"Shut the doors, prevent any one escaping."

Then a person, with his hand pressing his left breast, rushed from the cluster of members standing round the entrance, staggered towards the door of the House, groaned faintly, and fell forwards on his face. Mr. Smith, member for Norwich, was the first to approach him. Thinking it some one in a fit, he walked round the fallen man, not at first recognising his person, or knowing that he was wounded; but finding he did not stir, he instantly stooped to assist him, and on raising his head was horrified to discover that it was the Premier. Requesting the assistance of a bystander, the two men instantly raised Mr. Percival, carried him between them into the room of the Speaker's secretary, and set him on a table resting in their arms. He was already not only speechless, but senseless, and blood was oozing fast from his mouth.

They felt his heart. In a few minutes the pulsation grew fainter. In ten minutes he was dead.

Mr. Lynn, a surgeon of Great George-street, instantly came and examined the body. He found a pistol-bullet had struck the Premier on the left side, just over the fourth rib. It had penetrated three inches, and passed obliquely towards the heart, causing almost instant death.

The moment Mr. Percival fell, several voices had called out:

"That is the fellow."

"That is the man who fired the pistol."

The assassin was sitting, in a state of great agitation, on a bench by the fireplace, with one or two persons to the right of him. General Gascoyne, M.P. for Liverpool, with a soldier's promptitude, instantly sprang on him and clutching him by the breast of his coat and his neck, took the still smoking pistol from him, and told him that it was impossible that he could escape.

The murderer replied:

"I am the person who shot Mr. Percival, and I surrender myself."

Mr. J. Hume, member for Weymouth, also seized him, and took from his pocket a second pistol, ready primed and loaded with ball. Mr. Burgess, a solicitor of Weymouth, also helped to arrest the man, and to take him into the body of the house and give him into the custody of the messengers. The murderer's agitation had by this time entirely subsided. He seemed quite sane, grew perfectly calm, and commented on some slight inaccuracy in Mr. Burgess's statement.

General Gascoyne instantly recognised the assassin as John Bellingham, a man who had been a merchant in Liverpool. Three weeks before he had called on the general and requested his assistance in pressing his claims on parliament for redress for an unjust imprisonment

at St. Petersburg, the resident ambassador having been applied to in vain. The general had recommended him to memorialise the Premier.

A great fear fell on the cabinet ministers that night when the news of the desperate and at first unaccountable assassination reached them. The Prince Regent, amid the vulgar and meretricious splendour of his pseudo-Oriental palace at Brighton, shook like a jelly. A massacre of ministers was apprehended; there were the wildest rumours current of Luddite outrages and revolutionary conspiracies. Mr. Percival had, no doubt, been the first victim. Whose turn was to be next? Where could the sword be best aimed to reach the necks of the assassins? All was fear, gloom, and doubt? The people of England were known to be discontented; it might be necessary to use grape-shot and sabres to keep down their foolish and dangerous impatience for reform; besides, what was the correction of any abuse but an incipient revolution? "Scrape one barnacle from the vessel of state, as well stave and sink her at once in the Red Sea of Jacobinism," screamed the political Chinese.

Many of those grave and eminent men who came with lushed step into the Speaker's drawing-room, where the Premier lay dead, must, as they looked at the pale calm face, and, as the events of the life of the murdered man passed swiftly through their minds, have remembered the peroration of his speech as Attorney-General at the trial of Peltier, the French editor, in London for his libel against Napoleon: it seemed now almost like a presentiment of his own fate.

Replying to Mackintosh, Mr. Percival had then said (1802): "There is something so base and disgraceful—there is something so contrary to everything that belongs to the character of an Englishman—there is something so immoral in the idea of assassination, that the exhortation to assassinate this or any other chief magistrate would be a crime against the honourable feelings of the English law."

The biography of Mr. Percival is brief. He was the second son of the Earl of Egmont, and was born in 1762. Educated at Harrow and Cambridge, he went to the Bar in 1786, in spite of great shyness, soon became leader of the Midland Circuit, and in 1796 won his silk gown, became member for Northampton, and a protégé of Pitt. When that minister fought Mr. Tierney, he kindly declared Mr. Percival competent to be his successor, and even to cope with Fox.

Percival supported Pitt in all his measures, especially in the mischievous and unnecessary war with France. Under Addington, the busy satellite became Attorney-General. He was legal adviser of the unhappy Princess of Wales, and, under the Duke of Portland, was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, demanding 2000*l.* a year, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, for surrendering his business at the bar. Parliament growing indignant, he reluctantly relinquished the appointment, and his friends trumpeted forth his patriotic disinterestedness.

On the death of the Duke of Portland, in 1807, he became Premier.

Palpably a third-rate professional politician—scarcely fit to carry Lord Chatham's crutch, Percival was glorified by the suddenness of his melancholy death: his smooth ready talk was called éloquence; his quickness at figures, genius for finance; his obstinate and narrow-minded persecution of his Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, intrepidity and energy. Modern historians of his own party still idolise his memory as "a champion of the Protestant faith." It must be allowed that he was a good man; sincere, honest, and of unimpeachable integrity. Like Pitt, he died poor, though hundreds of millions had passed through his hands.

On the 15th of May, Bellingham was tried at the Old Bailey, before Sir James Mansfield, Baron Graham, and Mr. Justice Grose. Most of the aldermen were present, besides many noblemen and members of parliament. Mr. Alley (prisoner's counsel) objected to the prisoner being called upon to plead, and applied for postponement of trial, on ground that he had affidavits to prove prisoner insane. The court deciding that this application should not be granted, the prisoner pleaded Not guilty.

The witnesses for prosecution having been examined, Bellingham proposed to leave his defence to his counsel, but was informed that prisoners' counsel were not allowed to address the court in defence. He then addressed the jury in a speech of above an hour's length, interspersed with the reading of several documents. He had, he said, no personal malice against Mr. Percival. "The unfortunate lot had fallen upon him" as the leading member of the administration, which had repeatedly refused any address for the injuries he (the prisoner) had sustained in Russia. He had been engaged in business at Liverpool; in 1804 he went to Russia. His business being finished, he was about to leave Archangel for England, when a ship called the *Soleure*, insured at Lloyd's, was lost in the White Sea. Lloyd's refusing to pay the insurance, Bellingham was suspected of having something to do with their refusal (though he had not), and, in consequence, he was seized in his carriage while passing the Russian frontier by order of the governor at Archangel, and imprisoned. He applied to the British ambassador, Lord Leveson Gower, who, having learnt from the military governor at Archangel that he was detained for a legal cause, and had conducted himself in a most indecorous manner, refused to interfere. His young wife, with an infant in arms, was obliged to make the journey to England alone. He himself, after suffering unheard-of hardships, kept in a miserable condition, and banded from prison to prison, in 1809 received at midnight his discharge from prison, and an order to quit the Russian dominions, with a pass; which was, in fact, an acknowledgment of the justice of his cause. Since his return to England, he had applied to the most influential men in the government, had been sent from

one to another; last of all to Mr. Percival, who obstinately refused to sanction his claims in parliament. If he had met Lord Gower after his resolution was taken, he (Lord G.) should have received the ball, and not Mr. Percival. He concluded his defence by justifying the murder, on account of the injuries he had received from the government. He disclaimed the plea of insanity.

The case was desperate, for the prisoner had stoutly denied his own insanity, and pleaded justification for his crime. Mr. Alley had only the one excuse to press forward—insanity. That is, not that the prisoner did not mean to shoot Mr. Percival, but that he did so with a disordered mind.

The swearing was very hard. A lady from Southampton, who had known Bellingham from a child, declared that she believed him deranged, so far as related to his sufferings in Russia. She had never known him to be under restraint, but his father had died mad. A servant at a house in New Milman-street, where Bellingham had lodged for four months, had thought the prisoner deranged for some time past, particularly just before the murder.

The trial lasted eight hours. Lord Mansfield having summed up, the jury retired for ten minutes, and then returned a verdict of guilty. The Recorder passed sentence of death, directing that the prisoner's body should, after execution, be dissected and anatomised.

During the early part of the trial, which lasted eight hours, Bellingham trifled with the flowers placed on the front of the dock. He read his defence in a fervid but calm manner, but occasionally shed tears. At the conclusion he requested a glass of water, as any speaker on indifferent subjects might have done. He listened to his sentence, however, with the most intense awe, and was led out of court overcome with grief.

Bellingham's antecedents were not very creditable, if the contemporaneous reports can be implicitly trusted. He seems to have been a turbulent, untoward, rather unprincipled adventurer, of a subtle, dangerous, rankling disposition, inflamed almost to madness by a long series of misfortunes. He was a native of St. Neot's, in Huntingdonshire, and was born in 1771. When he was only a year old, his father, a land-surveyor, betraying symptoms of mental derangement, was sent to St. Luke's, but at the end of a year was discharged as incurable, and died soon after. At the age of fourteen, John Bellingham was apprenticed to a jeweller; but ran away from his master. His mother then appealing to a Mr. Daw, her brother-in-law, to do something for her son, Daw fitted Bellingham out as a subaltern in an East India regiment. This was a social advance, and the lad's fortune seemed now secured; but ill fortune followed him. The Hartwell, the transport in which he sailed, was wrecked, and he returned to England, abandoning his profession, for some unrecorded reason. Mr. Daw again came forward, and probably seeing a predisposition to commerce in the ex-soldier, advanced him money to purchase the business of a tinplate worker. But the un-

lucky man's house took fire soon afterwards, not without some suspicion (as usual in advantageous fires) falling upon the proprietor, and in 1794, Bellingham, the young tradesman, became bankrupt.

Bellingham then commenced business at Liverpool without any capital, as an insurance broker, and married an Irish girl named Neville, by whom he had one child. They lived very unhappily, and she eventually supported herself as a milliner.

He then entered a merchant's office at Liverpool, his commercial expertness gaining him the confidence of some of the leading houses engaged in the Russian trade. He was sent out to Archangel as their commission agent, living at that great emporium of the Siberian trade in the White Sea to purchase furs, tea, hardware, tallow, flax, pitch, and timber for the English market. Here Bellingham was still very unfortunate or very dishonest, or perhaps both.

He drew bills on his principals to the amount of ten thousand pounds, squandered the money, and made no shipments of the tea, tallow, or furs so purchased. Returning to England, and failing to fulfil a contract entered into with some merchants of Hull, Bellingham was thrown into prison. He then a second time visited Archangel, but was again unlucky, and was about to return to England, finding the country getting too hot for him, some disagreeable thing having occurred about the insurance of a vessel, when he was arrested for private debts. He accused the Russian authorities loudly of corruption and injustice, claiming the protection of the English ambassador, Lord Leveson Gower, and also of Sir L. Sharp; but they, finding his arrest to be legal, and the matter not within their province, declined to interfere, and left him to the Russian tribunals.

Only those who know the profound corruption of Russian officials can imagine the misery of a provincial Russian prison. Filth, starvation, cruelty, and a hopeless delay of justice, are the smallest of the evils a prisoner so friendless would have had to encounter.

Five years of such slavery in such a climate, far from wife and children, in the middle of a life that had yet to be retrieved, was enough to have maddened better men than the future assassin of Percival.

Released at last, without trial and without redress, the very abruptness of the release going far to prove his innocence, to what happiness and welcome did this unhappy man return? To beg, to sue, to supplicate to the insolent door-porters of the Marquis of Wellesley, the Earl of Uxbridge, Lord L. Gower, Mr. A. Paget, Sir F. Burdett, and Mr. Percival. Day by day he must have found the faces of the men he importuned grow harder and colder. Day by day hope must have lessened, and hatred struck a deeper root. Day by day his heart must have sunk within him as he passed up the old street to receive the same rebuffs.

Learned gentlemen interested in the High Court of Procrastination, members of the Prolongation Board, and all branches of the How-not-to-do-it Office, let us beg you to take warning by the fate of Mr. Percival, and remember that while some great inventors die calmly of hope deferred, there may be rasher and more violent natures who from time to time may resort to more desperate measures, and wreak on some of you the wrongs entailed by an obstructive system. Justice delayed becomes injustice. Every inventor who dies of official neglect retards by his death the progress of our national civilisation.

Bellingham suffered on the 18th of May.

When he entered the yard he walked firmly, and looking up calmly, observed, "Ah, it rains heavily!" He firmly and uniformly refused to express any contrition for his crime, or for Mr. Percival's fate; but he lamented the pain he had given Mrs. Percival and her children; he as steadily denied having any accomplice, when questioned on these points by the sheriffs. In answer to the clergyman, Bellingham said:

"I thank God for having enabled me to meet my fate with so much fortitude and resignation."

He remarked to the hangman:

"Do everything properly, that I may not suffer more than is necessary."

To another he said:

"Draw the cord tighter, I don't wish to have the power of offering resistance."

He ascended the scaffold with a cheerful countenance and a calm air, looked about him rapidly, but with no air of triumph or display. He at first objected to the cap being put over his face, but afterwards acquiesced. As the clock struck eight, and while the prisoner and the clergyman were still praying, the supporters of the internal square of the scaffold were struck away, and Bellingham dropped.

The revenge had been achieved, the penalty for the crime had been paid; and now, leaving the assassin unpitied and unwept on the dismal table of the hospital dissecting-room, let us pass to the honoured grave of the honest statesman. Perhaps the House of Commons, acting for the nation, received with enthusiasm the Prince's message recommending a parliamentary provision for the widow and children of the late Premier. On the 12th, Lord Castle-reagh moved a resolution, which was carried by a large majority, that an annuity of two thousand pounds should be granted to Mrs. Percival, and a sum of fifty thousand pounds should be vested in trustees for the benefit of her twelve children. On the 14th, three hundred members of parliament, dressed in mourning, carried up the address in answer to the Regent's message.

During the proceedings relative to the generous grant, the influential members (Canning, &c.), in their laudable desire to express their sorrow for the murdered Premier, claimed for him the highest honours due to political genius. It was not then the time to show that Spencer

Percival, though a useful and amiable man, was indisputably nothing more than a third-rate statesman.

KÄTCHEN'S CAPRICES.

IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

KÄTCHEN, on reaching home, ran into her own room, and, having fastened the door, relieved her mortified feelings by giving loose to a copious flow of tears. They were childlike tears; an April shower which fell easily, and gave place to sunshine, without leaving any stormy ground-swell behind them, as a fit of weeping will do in more passionate natures. She had made many high resolves that she would not, by any persuasion, give her company to the smokers in the kitchen. She would stay up there by herself, and be miserable without quite knowing why. But as the afternoon wore on, she repented of her resolution, and at last, about supper-time—that is to say, between four and five o'clock—she put her head outside the door to listen to what was going on. She heard her father's rich bass voice rolling out short disjointed sentences between pauses that, she knew, were delightfully occupied by smoking; and then she heard a ringing laugh that made her heart beat a little quicker, and, after a farewell glance at the green mirror, she stole down-stairs quietly, and went into the kitchen with an assumption of perfect indifference to the presence of any one there. Besides her father and Fritz, there was another man seated at the table, smoking a long pipe, which Kätchen at once perceived to be a real meerschaum. The stranger was a singularly ugly man, with flat blunt features and a short bull neck; but he looked good humoured withal, and intelligent. He was dressed in a frock-coat and trousers, instead of the peasant costume worn by the usual frequenters of the Golden Lamb. There was no one else there, for the one stout serving-maid who, with Kätchen, performed all the in-door work of the house, had leave on Sunday evenings to visit her friends. So Josef Kester and his two guests had the spacious kitchen all to themselves. A little table was drawn up close to one of the open windows, whence a sweet scent from the woodbine came in with the pure air, but was speedily choked and stifled by the heavy clouds of tobacco-smoke that almost hid the smokers from view. Each man had before him a great glass tankard of foaming amber beer. No one noticed Kätchen at first, and she went and sat down at another window furthest removed from that where the men were, and, pushing back the lattice, leant her elbows on the sill and looked out at the lake. Presently she felt that some one was standing very close to her, but she would not turn round; and then Fritz's voice said in her ear, "My Kätchen, won't you speak to me?"

"Your Kätchen, indeed! Not quite. And besides——" Here Kätchen gave a pretty toss of her head in the direction of the stranger.

"Oh, you needn't mind him," said simple

Fritz, delighted to think that he had discovered the reason of his sweetheart's show of coolness. "He's a very good fellow; Johann Laurier, a Swiss courier. He has come from Ischl with the foreign lady and gentleman. And he knows—that is, I told him—that you and I——"

"What did you tell him, Herr Rosenheim? How dare you talk about me to a stranger without my permission?"

It seemed fated that whatever Fritz said or did to-day should affront Kätchen.

This state of things was not entirely unprecedented; but Fritz always fell into the error of trying to reason about what was quite unreasonable, and, being neither so quick-witted nor so nimble of tongue as his pretty antagonist, he got the worst of the argument, even though he were thoroughly in the right.

"I suppose you're too proud to acknowledge me for a lover, now that you've dined with Herr Ebner, and been rowed in his boat. I heard of it. The folks at the Black Eagle say all sorts of things."

"The folks at the Black Eagle! And what do I care for them, or for you either, if you are so ignorant as to listen to the gossip of such as them. As to being proud, I can tell you I think father is quite as good as Herr Ebner, even though he may not be as rich. But he was as rich once, and richer too."

"Well, Kätchen, I'm sorry if I've made you cross——"

"Cross!"

"Well, if I've offended you, then. But it seemed as if you would hardly speak to me to-day when I first saw you, and now you are as cold and stand-offish as you can be; why or wherefore, I'm sure I don't know. I love you with all my heart, Kätchen, and I never shall love another girl the same as I do you."

And Fritz ventured to take up the plump sunburnt little hand that lay on Kätchen's lap. He held it lightly in his broad brown palm for a moment, and then the wilful girl jerked it away with a pettish exclamation, and walked off towards her father. "You tease me," said she, over her shoulder. It was somewhat trying to her lover, that, while Kätchen was extremely exacting in her demands on his devotion, she resented any show of tenderness on his part; and sometimes, when he was most earnest in his expressions of love, she would turn all he said into ridicule, and make the house ring with laughter at his protestations. To-night, however, she was not in a laughing mood, but went and sat beside her father, resting her hand on his shoulder, and apparently absorbed in thought. She was conscious, though, of Fritz's rueful puzzled look as he resumed his seat, and absently took long pulls at a perfectly cold pipe; and she was conscious, also, of the admiring gaze that Monsieur Jean Laurier cast upon her flushed face. "Your daughter, Mr. Landlord?" said he, with a polite bow.

"Yes, Herr Laurier, my little Katerina—Kätchen, as she's always called. Child, this gentleman is a great traveller, and can tell you

of wonderful places he has seen, and wonderful people too. He speaks all languages——"

"Not quite all, Herr Landlord," modestly put in Laurier.

"Yes, yes, *all*, I say—all that are worth speaking. You should have come down before, you puss, and you would have heard such things about Rome, and Paris, and Vienna. I've been relating part of my history to the Herr, and he thinks it very hard that a man like myself should have been so ill treated by fortune. But, lord! I could explain it if I liked. A good deal of it is the fault of others. However, no more on that score. It can't interest a stranger."

Nevertheless, no stranger was ever half an hour beneath the roof of the Golden Lamb without hearing Josef Kester's version of his own misfortunes.

"What fine hair the Fräulein has!" said Laurier, turning the discourse.

"Our Kätchen? Yes, friend, you may say so; and a pretty colour, too; not like the coarse black horsehair one sees hereabouts. Her blessed mother was a Saxon, and she has her mother's hair."

"It's long, too, I suppose," pursued the courier. "It seems all coiled round and round, so."

"Long! I believe you. Pull that bodkin out, Kätchen, and let the Herr see its length."

And, as Kätchen hesitated, he took the pins out with his own hand, and the great silky plaits tumbled down over her shoulders.

"Unplait it, child. It's nearly twice as long when it's all loose. There, Herr Laurier, did you ever see a prettier sight than that in your travels?"

The Swiss got up, and took a long soft press in his hand, weighing it with a thoughtful look.

"Don't mind me, mam'sell; I've a daughter as old as you, at home in Lausanne. I tell you what; there's a friend of mine, a hairdresser in Paris, who would give you almost any sum you'd like to ask, for this hair. It's all the fashion just now, and they can't get enough of it anywhere."

Kätchen jumped back, and hastily twisted up her hair into one great lump, looking meanwhile half in terror, half in indignation, at the courier. But old Josef roared with laughter.

"No, no, thank you. Not to make a wig for our empress herself, God bless her! We're not so poor as that comes to, yet awhile. Don't look scared, Kätchen. I should like to see the barber who'd put scissors near your head."

"I'm not scared, father. How stupid you are! But I don't want to make a show of myself any longer, that's all."

Laurier was more a man of the world than poor Rosenheim, and had lived in it some twenty years longer, so, instead of apologising, or arguing, or retracting, he began a description of the wonderful head-dresses that the ladies wore in Paris, the fine feathers, and flowers, and jewels, which adorned their borrowed locks. And in listening to this topic of feminine interest, Kätchen had time to recover her composure, and even put in a few questions

of her own. Before the evening was over, Laurier had established himself in the good graces of both father and daughter.

"Whenever I come this way I shall certainly pay you a visit, Herr Kester," said the courier. They parted with many good wishes on both sides, and Fritz was well pleased to receive a tolerably gracious farewell from his capricious lady-love.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day things resumed their old monotonous course at the Golden Lamb. Fritz and the friendly courier were far away on their road to Salzburg. Laurier had said that if he chanced to travel in their direction next year, he should certainly come and see the Kesters; but, meanwhile, there was all the autumn, and winter, and spring to get through. Gradually—Kätchen could scarcely trace how—it came to be no unusual thing for Caspar Ebner to drop in to the Golden Lamb on an evening, and before long it was quite an established custom for the Kesters to be taken to and from the church at Hallstadt in his boat. Little presents of flowers, and fruit, and choice cheese, or a bottle of fine Rudesheimer, were sent from the Black Eagle to the Golden Lamb; and once Herr Ebner brought out from his pocket a pair of bright gold earrings, which he begged Kätchen to accept. But these she refused. And the refusal brought on an argument which ended in a formal offer of Caspar Ebner's hand and heart. "Herr Ebner," said Kätchen with a gasp, "you can't be in earnest!"

"Not in earnest, Katerina! Is it possible that you have been blind to my feelings all this time? Can you honestly say so?"

"Well, I fancied, perhaps, that you liked me a little, and—and—thought me pretty; but I never believed that you really—really—" And Kätchen began to cry. Why *would* people be so tiresome, and serious, and in earnest? Ebner was terribly distressed at sight of her tears.

"My child, my child," said he, "pray don't cry in that way. I wouldn't grieve or vex you for more than I can tell. Try to think seriously of what I have said to you. I love you, Katerina, better than I believe you will ever be loved again."

"But I d—don't love you," sobbed Kätchen.

"I don't expect you should, all at once. Indeed no. I am twenty years older than you, my child, and staid and dull in your eyes. But I will be kind to you—oh, Kätchen, if you will let me, I will be so kind to you! You shall be mistress of everything I possess, and your father shall have a home with us whilst he lives. I have plenty."

"But I am quite, quite poor. I have not a kreutzer of dowry. Perhaps you didn't know?" And the blue eyes looked up into Herr Ebner's spectacles with a naive expression of wonder. The spectacles flashed all over their unmeaning surface as he shook his head, but the eyes behind them were very soft and tender when he answered:

"I did know, I do know; but, my child, no riches could make you more dear to me."

Kätchen had a heart, in spite of her frivolity, and it was touched by the generosity and disinterested affection of her middle-aged suitor. But to marry him! Ah, that was another thing! And then there was Fritz. No, it couldn't be. But Ebner refused to take her answer at once. He would give her a week to consider of his proposal, and meanwhile would not obtrude himself on her in any way. "Only," said he, as he went away, "do try to be good to me, my child—*try* to be good to me."

When old Josef Kester heard of the proposal, he was elate with joy and pride.

"Ain't you astonished, father?" said Kätchen.

"Astonished? Not a bit of it. I saw, long ago, that the man was desperately in love with one of us two, and I naturally supposed it to be you."

But his pleasure was suddenly quenched when his daughter protested that, though she felt deeply grateful to Herr Caspar Ebner, and proud of his good opinion, she could never consent to be his wife. At first Josef treated this as mere childish folly that meant nothing. But the more he argued, and the angrier he grew, the more obstinate became Kätchen's opposition. So at last he took refuge in his old system of letting her take her own way—for the present.

Two or three days of the week went by, and Kätchen had by no means made up her mind as to the answer she should give Caspar Ebner. Her father's tactics of non-opposition were beginning to tell. She thought of the grandeur that lay at her feet, ready to be picked up. The fine clothes, the servants, the importance, the chance of travel, perhaps even of seeing Vienna—all these temptations crowded through her mind pell-mell. And then, duty to her father! Ought not *that* to weigh with her? In the midst of her indecision came a letter from Fritz. That is to say, a letter written by some friend at Fritz's dictation, for his own calligraphic powers extended only to the crooked signing of his name. A letter from Fritz! She had never received one from him before.

"My own Kätchen. I am right glad that I can send you this letter. A trusted friend here at Salzburg writes it down, but the words are all my own. You seemed somewhat cold when I saw you last; but I fear I was to blame. To confess the truth, I was jealous of the landlord of the Black Eagle. Yes indeed. Was I not a fool? Just as if you would think of him! But true love is always kin with jealousy, they say. I know your worth, my angel, and feel sure of your fidelity. But only I would advise, go not too often to Herr Ebner's house. Folks will talk else. I shall see you, please Heaven, early in the year. Meanwhile, forget me not."

"Thine, ever loving,

"FRITZ ROSENHEIM.

"Greet thy father heartily for me."

Kätchen was as uncertain as the sea in her moods; and this unlucky letter sent her into a

most hard-hearted and contemptuous frame of mind. "He is sure of me, is he? Could he say more if we had been betrothed before the whole village? And why *shouldn't* he be jealous, indeed? As if it were impossible to love any one better than him! Advises me not to go to the Black Eagle! It's downright insolent. I know very well what I'm doing." And so she worked up her wrath to boiling-point. On a sudden she crushed the offending letter in her hand, and ran down to the water's brink, where her father was pottering about the old boat, trying to mend it in an awkward, unworkmanlike way. He looked tired and aged, and conscious of waning strength and failure in his attempt. His clothes were very threadbare and shabby. His broad placid forehead was puckered up into ignoble cross lines. The down-hill path was getting steeper and steeper; the downward pace quicker and quicker. Tears came into Kätchen's eyes as she looked at him, and, with an impulse born of many mingled emotions, she ran to him, and putting her hands on his shoulders, said, "Father, would you really like me to marry Herr Ebner? Would it make you happy?"

"Child! it is as if you had dropped from heaven! I was just brooding over a tangled web of troubles, and thinking that there was but one way to unravel them, and that you wouldn't take that way, when behold, you come with the welcomest words on your lips that I've heard this many a long year."

"Would it really and truly make you happy, father?"

"Happy! More happy than I thought ever to be again, child."

"Then I will," said Kätchen, in a low voice.

Josef kissed his daughter, and blessed her, but repressed any exuberant demonstrations of joy, although he could have leaped and shouted aloud. Thought he: "If I say too much, she'll begin to argue on the other side, and change her mind altogether." Josef was growing cunning.

CHAPTER V.

NOT to be tempted to break his word to Kätchen, Herr Ebner had gone away from Gossau, thus leaving her quite free and unmolested for her week of consideration. Had Ebner been on the spot, Josef Nester would have stolen up to the Black Eagle to give him the good tidings secretly. As it was, he had no choice but to wait until the end of the week. The days passed slowly with him, but to Kätchen they seemed to fly past with unwonted rapidity. She sat idly dreaming from morning to night, scarcely making a pretence of turning the great spinning-wheel, before which she sat nearly all day. The servant girl was indignant, and complained that all the work fell on her shoulders; but old Josef bade her hold her tongue, and gave hints of some grandeur that was shortly to befall the family, to which Liese listened open-mouthed. At length dawned Saturday morning. The year was well advanced now. Cold winds, chilled by the mountain snows, rushed across the lake and whistled in the scanty foliage, stripping the boughs barer and barer at

every gust. The early morning hours were raw and comfortless, although towards mid-day the sun gained power and brightness. When Kätchen arose that Saturday morning she felt as though a tight hand were pressing on her heart. "I must decide—I must decide!" These words rang in her ears as if another had spoken them aloud, but they were only uttered by her own anxious thoughts. She came down to prepare breakfast so pale and heavy-eyed that even slow-witted Liese perceived there was something wrong, and bluntly asked her young mistress what was the matter with her, for which attention Liese received a sharp snubbing. Old Kester noticed Kätchen's wan looks, but said nothing. In truth, he was a little anxious himself. She had promised to marry Herr Ebner, and that was well; but he did not wish his child to be unhappy.

"It is cold," said Kätchen, turning from the table to cower over the great cooking-stove in the kitchen. "I'm so cold, I can't eat." There she sat all the morning, idly clicking her knitting-needles now and again. Slowly the day wore on. Dinner-time came, but Kätchen was still too cold to eat, she said, though the sun was high in the heavens. She tasted a few spoonfuls of soup, and then wrapped a warm cloak around her and went out. It was impossible, she said to herself, to sit there any longer, fancying every step to be Ebner's, and expecting to see him each time the latch clicked. Kätchen wandered down to the lake's brink, where a pile of fuel was stacked, and sat down on some logs, just as she had done that Sunday at Hallstadt. She thought of that day, and of the many subsequent days when she had received kindness from Caspar Ebner, and she remembered the high character he bore, and his reputation for honour and honesty. She summed up his good qualities in her mind one by one, and asked her heart—so she phrased it mentally—could she consent to be his wife? and something, which I too must call her heart for want of a better word, answered, "No!"

"He is far better than I—far, far better. He is true, and gentle, and generous. Can't I marry him?" "No!"

"He is a learned man compared to ignorant little me, and rich and well thought of. Can't I marry him?" "No!"

"He offers a home to father, and will smoothe his last years, and be as a son to him. Can't I marry him?" "No!"

Kätchen was agast. She had fancied there was nothing to be done but for her to say unconcernedly, "I will have this man for my husband." To bring herself to this point might be difficult, but the point once reached, all would be settled. And now, behold, when she said "I will," some voice in her bosom answered "I *won't*!" All this time, too, the image of Fritz was haunting her brain. She tried not to think of him, and even thought she was not thinking of him; but there was his face, looking sadly and fondly at her, if she but closed her eyes an instant in her efforts at reflection. Truly this "self" of hers was a most incompre-

hensible and unmanageable antagonist, and Kätchen at last resolved to give up the struggle and float with the tide. Just as she had arrived at this philosophical decision, a footstep crushed the pebbles on the beach, and Caspar Ebner stood before her. He advanced with outstretched arms, but Kätchen jumped up with a start and made quite a leap backwards.

"Did I frighten you, Katarina?" said Ebner, a little crestfallen.

"No, only you came sudden like."

"Are you not cold here, sitting still? The air blows chill from the lake. Will you walk a little way with me?"

Kätchen's knees trembled as she complied with his request. She was in a nervous fever of apprehension, but Ebner did not at once broach the important topic. This was a respite, but then she almost wished he would plunge boldly into the subject, waiting was so dreadful. She had not to wait long, however.

"Kätchen," said Ebner, when they had walked a few yards side by side, "have you thought of what I said to you?"

"Yes," said Kätchen, in a faint little voice.

"I kept my word, did I not? I went away and left you quite free." No answer.

"Kätchen, may I hope you have a kind word to say to me? It will be easy for you, but, oh, how precious to me!"

"It isn't easy," said Kätchen, with a childlike catching of her breath.

"Well, no; perhaps not quite easy for a young maiden to say; but you will say it, eh, Kätchen? You will tell me that you will be my wife, my treasure, my darling, the mistress of my home?" And he caught her two cold little hands in his, bending down his tall form so as to look into her face. The action roused Kätchen into energy. She wrenched away her hands, though he held them in a strong grasp, and clasped them before her tearful eyes.

"No, no, no, I can't. Indeed—indeed I can't. Don't be angry with me; I am grateful indeed. You are very kind and very generous, but I can't marry you." And she sobbed as though she would choke. Ebner stood and looked at her. A hundred thoughts rushed through his mind, but he could find only one word.

"Why?" he said, jerking the syllable dryly out of his throat.

"Because I—I can't," sobbed Kätchen.

It did not sound logical, but it was true.

"You can. If you choose to say yes, you can, unless there is some one else that you love." Ebner's throat seemed to get drier and drier, and the words came huskily. Kätchen caught at them. They seemed to offer a tangible reason.

"There is some one who loves me very much—" she began, and then stopped short. Ebner's brow darkened into a frown, and he looked sternly at the weeping girl.

"You have deceived me, then," said he, at last. "I trusted in you. I saw you were childish, but I did not think you dishonourable."

"Dishonourable! Oh dear, oh dear, what makes you say such things, and look like that?"

"Yes, dishonourable. I repeat it. Cruel and heartless. You have been playing with me; drawing me on, and all the while you were the promised wife of another man. Why did you not tell me so at once, honestly?"

"But I'm not," retorted Kätchen, roused to anger in her turn. She was in the wrong, but that did not make her the less angry. "I'm not his promised wife, and how dare you say so? I'll never have him. I don't love him, nor you, nor anybody. I wish I had never been born, I do. You're all cruel and unkind, and I hate you, every one!" Kätchen wrapped her cloak over her head, and ran off sobbing, with her apron at her swollen tear-stained eyes. Ebner was astounded. Was this his sweet, bright, good-humoured Kätchen? This pettish, passionate, unreasonable girl? Caspar Ebner was in love, it was true, but then he had just been refused; and that, perhaps, helped to make him clear-sighted. At all events, he did perceive that Kätchen had been strangely wayward, capricious, and, he thought, deceitful. When a man seriously means to ask a girl to be his wife, it is difficult to persuade him that she is not fully aware of his intention. He could not but believe that Kätchen had understood his feelings from the first, and now she cast him off, and told him of some one else who loved her. His amour propre was deeply hurt. In truth, Ebner had not been at all unconscious of the advantages which Kätchen would have derived from his alliance. She was penniless, burdened with a shiftless old father, and in a humble rank of life; but if she had consented to marry him, he would never have made her feel these things by word or deed. Now they came vividly before his mind. He had been willing to give up his easy selfish bachelor life, to raise this ignorant little peasant girl to be the mistress of his home; more than willing, eager to do so, but now under the shock of her unreasonable behaviour, he said to himself that it would have been a sacrifice. And so he walked slowly home, scorching out the pain of disappointed love with the heat of his angry resentment. But, alas! the anger would soon pass, and leave the wounded heart still smarting.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XI. THE AMERICAN LETTERS.

STEWART ROUTH was as hard a man as could readily be found, but his hardness was not proof against his meeting with George Dallas, and he showed Harriet how great a trial it was to him, and how much he feared his own constancy, when he told her he thought she had better not be present at their meeting. The curse of an unholy alliance had fallen upon these two, and was now beginning to make itself felt. Each was desirous to conceal from the other the devices to which they were compelled to resort, in order to keep up the false appearances to which they were condemned; in all their life there was no time in which they were free from restraint, except in solitude. But, though the effect was in each case the same, the origin was widely different. Harriet suffered for her husband's sake; he, entirely for his own. He had calculated that if anything in his appearance, voice, and manner, should escape his control, George would be certain to impute it to the natural feelings of horror and regret with which he would have received the intelligence conveyed to him by Harriet, of George's discovery of the identity of the murdered man.

"You had better remain up-stairs until I call you," Routh had said to Harriet, "when Dallas comes to dinner. It will be easier for you," he added. Harriet was sitting listlessly by her dressing-table while he spoke, and he stood behind her chair, and looked gloomily at the reflexion of her face in the glass.

She smiled faintly. "Thank you, Stewart," she said; "it will be easier." Then, after a brief pause, "Would you very much mind my not going down to dinner at all?"

So far from minding it, Routh instantly felt that her absence would be a great relief. It would enable him to sound George thoroughly, to scheme upon whatever discoveries he should make concerning his future plans; and then, Harriet had done all the hard work, had prepared the way for him, had got over the difficulty and the danger. A little unpleasantness, some disagreeable emotion, must indeed be encountered, that was inevitable, but everything

might go off well, and if so, Harriet's restraining presence, Harriet's face, with its constant reminder in it, would be much better out of sight.

"Not at all," he answered. "Stay up-stairs if you like. I'll tell Dallas you are a little knocked up, but will be all right in the morning."

"He will not be surprised, I dare say," she replied, "though it was not my way to be knocked up, formerly."

"Nor to be always harping on one string, either; and I can't say there's a change for the better," said Routh, roughly. Once or twice of late the innate ruffianism of the man had come out towards her, from whom it had once been so scrupulously concealed. But she did not heed it; not a quiver crossed the drooping rigid face, at which Routh once more glanced covertly before he left the room. It would have been impossible to tell whether she had even heard him.

Routh went down to the well-appointed dining-room, so different to the scene of the dinners of which George had formerly partaken, in the character of his guest. Wherever Harriet was, neatness and propriety never were absent, but there was something more than neatness and propriety in Routh's house now. Nevertheless, the look which the master of the house cast upon the well-laid, well-lighted table, with its perfect, unobtrusive, unpretentious appointments, was full of gloom. He wished he had not come down so soon; the inevitable meeting assumed a more portentous aspect with every minute that it was delayed; he wished he had not told Harriet to remain in her room. The fact was, Routh was staggered by the first failure of his plans. Everything had gone so right with him; his calculations had been fulfilled so exactly, so unfailingly, until now, and this unexpected accident had befallen through a blunder of his own. True, Harriet had met it with amazing tact, and had so treated it, that if only it could be further dexterously managed, it might be turned to ultimate advantage, and an incalculable strengthening of his position. Let him keep his thoughts to that view of the question, and keep his nerves still. Were they going to play him false now, his nerves, which had never failed him before? So Mr. Stewart Routh passed a very unpleasant quarter of an hour before his expected guest arrived. He had just had recourse, as much in weakness as in nervousness, to a flask of brandy which stood on the sideboard, and had drank off half a glass-

ful, when a knock at the door was quickly answered by the grave and correct man-servant, who formed an important and eminently respectable feature of the improved household of the Rouths, and the well-known quick tread of Dallas crossed the hall.

"Well, Routh, old fellow!"

"George, my boy; delighted to see you!"—and the meeting was over; and Routh, looking into the young man's face, saw that not a trace of suspicion rested upon it, and that the material before him was as plastic as ever.

"Harriet is not very well this evening," said Routh, "and begs you will excuse her if she does not make her appearance. I undertook to make it all right, and indeed I am rather glad we should be alone just at first. I have so much to say and to hear, and Harriet has had a long talk with you already."

"Yes," said George, and his smile was at once overcast, and his face darkened into gloom, "I had a long talk with her. Of course, Routh, she told you the dreadful discovery I have made, and the curious way in which I am implicated in this ghastly affair."

"She told me all about it, my dear fellow," returned Routh. "But here comes dinner, and we must postpone discussion until afterwards. I can only say now that I think Harriet's view of the matter perfectly correct, and her advice the soundest possible; it generally is, you know of old." And then Routh made a slight signal suggestive of caution to his guest, and the two men stood by the fireplace and talked of trifles while the irreproachable man-servant set the dishes upon the table, assisted by a neat parlour-maid.

While far more serious thoughts were busy in George's mind, over the surface of it was passing observation of the changed order of things, and an amused perception of the alteration in Routh himself. It was as he had said in his letter—he had assumed the responsibility, the pose, the prosperity of the genuine plodding "City man;" and he looked the part to absolute perfection. "And yet," George thought, "he knows that one who was with us two the last time we met has met with a violent death; he knows that I am in a position as painful and perilous as it is extraordinary, and that he is indirectly mixed up with the dreadful event, and he is as cool and unconcerned as possible. I suppose it is constitutional, this callousness; but I'm not sure it is very enviable. However, one thing is certain—it makes him the very best adviser one can possibly have under such circumstances. He won't be carried away by the horror of the circumstances, anyhow."

The dinner proceeded, and George yielded rapidly to the influences which had been so powerful, and which he had been so determined to resist, when out of Routh's presence and under the sway of his penitence and his determination to reform. The conversation of Routh asserted all its old charm; the man's consummate knowledge of the world, his varied experience, the perfect refinement and tact which

he could display at will, the apparent putting off of old things, the tone of utter respectability which enabled George's newly-shaped conscience to consent to the fascination as really as his predilections, had more than ever an irresistible attraction for the young man. During dinner, which, in the altered state of affairs, involved the presence of the servant, Routh kept the conversation almost entirely to Dallas's own doings, plans, and prospects. He knew Amsterdam well, and talked of Dutch art and the history of the Low Countries with much skill and fluency. Without an allusion which could supply material for the curiosity and the gossip of the servants, he made George understand that the Bohemian element had been completely banished from his life and its associations; he sketched a plan of London life for George, moderately prosperous, quite practical, and entirely inoffensive. He made him, in short, as ready to congratulate himself on the resumption of their intimacy in the present phase of his moral being, as he had been to rejoice in its formation under former conditions.

Routh's spirits rose with his senses. He felt a depraved pride in the devilish skill he possessed in his grand faculty of deception. He excelled in it, he revelled in its exercise, and he had not enjoyed it, in this orthodox way, of late. He had been making money, it is true, and doing some real work as well as a good deal of swindling in the process, but he had had only the opportunity of using a certain set of his faculties. His persuasive eloquence, his personal influence, his skilful and expansive but shrewd falsehood, had lain dormant for some time. As a singer who has lost his voice for a time suddenly finds the liquid notes filling the air with all their accustomed power and sweetness, and exults in the recovered faculty, so Stewart Routh marked the pleasure, the enthusiasm, almost enabling George to forget the coming painful topic of discussion from which only a few minutes divided them, as he listened to the voice of the charmer, who had never before charmed him so wisely nor so well.

At length the wine was set upon the table, and then they were alone; and by this time, so complete did Routh feel his resumption of power over George Dallas, that it was with indifference only very little feigned that he said:

"And now, George, let us go into this sad business about poor Deane. It has quite floored Harriet, as I dare say you guessed."

"And so you give me the same counsel as Harriet has given me," said George, when he had to tell his story all over again, and had worked himself up into a new fit of excitement over the horror of the murder, and the dreadful idea of the ignorance of the deed in which the dead man's relatives still remained.

"I do, indeed, George," said Routh, solemnly; "in taking any other course, you will expose yourself to certain difficulty, and, indeed, to imminently probable danger. While you have been telling me all this, I have been thinking how

fortunate it was that I was away at the time, and so down upon my luck, that I never knew or thought about any public affairs, and so did not hear of the murder except in the vaguest way. In the peculiar lustre of our London civilisation, you know, George, somebody found dead in the river is so frequent a note, that nobody thinks about it."

"Not in a general way," said George; "but they made so much of this, and were so confident that it was a political affair, I cannot understand how any of us escaped hearing of it."

"Yes," acquiesced Routh, "it is very extraordinary, but such things do happen. And rather fortunate, it seems, that they do, for if I had dropped in on the inquest, it would have been very awkward for you."

"Why?" said George; "after all, the truth must have come out, and all this misery about my mother would have been avoided."

An evil look from Routh's eye lighted for a moment on the young man's unconscious face, then glanced away, as he said:

"You forget that all I could have said must have strongly favoured the notion that the man who wore the coat which the waiter swore to, and was last seen with Deane, was the last person who ever saw him alive. If I had had time to think, of course I shouldn't have said a word about it; but if I had been hurried into speaking, that is what I must have said. Come, George, you are much too sensitive about this matter. Of course, I'm sorry for Deane, but I care a great deal more for you, and I decline to look at any part of this matter except such as concerns you. As to his relatives, as that part of the business appears to distress you most keenly, I must set your mind at rest by informing you that he had not a near relation in the world."

"Indeed," said George. "How do you know?"

"He told me so," said Routh. "You will say, perhaps, that is not very trustworthy evidence, but I think we may take it in this particular instance for more than its general worth. He was the coldest, hardest, most selfish fellow I ever knew in the whole course of my experience, which had included a good deal of scoundrelism, and he seemed so thoroughly to appreciate the advantages of such isolation, that I believe it really did exist."

"He was certainly a mystery in every way," said George. "Where did he live? We never knew him—at least I never did—except loafing about at taverns, and places of the kind."

"I don't know where he lived," said Routh; "he never gave me an address, or a rendezvous, except at some City eating-house, or West-end billiard-room."

"How very extraordinary that no one recognised the description. It was in every way remarkable, and the fur-lined coat must have been known to some one. If I had seen any mention of the murder, I should have remembered that coat in a moment."

"Would you?" said Routh. "Well, it would have thrown me off the scent, for I never hap-

pened to see it. An American coat, no doubt. However, I have a theory, which I think you will agree with, and which is this: I suspect he had been living somewhere in another name—he told me he wasn't always known by that of Deane—under not very creditable circumstances, and as he must have had some property, which, had he been identified, must have been delivered up to the authorities, those in the secret have very wisely held their tongues."

"You think there was a woman in the case?"

Routh smiled a superior smile.

"Of course I think so; and knowing as much, or as little of the man, as you and I know, we are not likely to blame her much for consulting her own interests exclusively. This seems a curious case to us, because we happen to know about it; but just think, in this enormous city, in this highly criminal age, how common such things must be. How many persons may not have dropped out of existence since you and I last met, utterly unknown and uncared for, amid the mass of human beings here? It is no such rare thing, George, believe me, and you must listen to reason in this matter, and not run absurd risks to do an imaginary piece of justice."

This was Harriet's counsel merely put in colder, more worldly words. Routh watched his listener keenly as he gave it, and saw that his purpose was gained. He would have been glad now to have turned the conversation into some other channel; and did partially succeed in directing it to Dallas's literary prospects and intentions, but only for a time. George pertinaciously came back to the murder, to his mother's state, to his apprehensions that she might never recover, and to his altered feelings towards Mr. Carruthers.

Routh made very effective use of the latter topic. He enlarged upon the pride and sensitiveness of Mr. Carruthers; adverted to the pleasure with which, in case of her recovery, his mother would hail the better state of things for which Mr. Carruthers's letter to his step-son, combined with George's adoption of a new and steady career, would afford an opening; and congratulated George upon having been saved from taking any step which, by bringing public notice upon himself in so terrible a matter, must have incensed the proud man, and irritated him against him incalculably.

George was amenable to this line of reasoning, and with only occasional divergence from the main topic of their discourse, the evening passed away, and the two men parted for the night, it having been agreed that Harriet should be taken into consultation in the morning, and a well-considered letter written to Mr. Carruthers.

George Dallas was in the dining-room on the following morning before Routh and Harriet came in, and he found a letter directed to himself, in a hand with which he was unacquainted, on the breakfast-table. He broke the seal with some alarm and much curiosity. A slip of paper folded round two thin, limp letters, formed the enclosure; it bore only the words: "My

dear boy, I forgot to give you these letters. You had better read them. I think they are from your uncle. E. B."

George sat down by the window, through which the soft air of a morning, bright and beautiful even in London, came refreshingly in. He looked at the postmarks of the two letters, and broke the seal of that which bore the earliest date, first. As he read the letter, which was long, and closely written, an occasional exclamation escaped him, and when he had finished its perusal, he threw it hastily down, and impatiently tore open the other. This one, on the contrary, was brief; he had read the few lines it contained in a few minutes, with a face expressive of the utmost astonishment, when Harriet, whose noiseless step had escaped his hearing, entered the room.

Without pausing to exchange the customary greeting, she came quickly towards him, and asked him "What was the matter? Had he any bad news?"

"Not bad news, but most astonishing, most unexpected news, Mrs. Routh. These letters have been sent to me from Poynings; they are written to my mother by my uncle, her only brother, and they announce his immediate arrival in England. How fortunate that Ellen should have sent them to me. But I don't know what to do about sending the news to my mother. She ought to know it. What can I do?"

"Communicate with Mr. Carruthers at once, George," said Harriet, in the tone of quiet decision with which she was accustomed to settle matters submitted to her judgment. "He is with her, and knows what she can bear. Sit down now and have some breakfast, and tell me about this uncle of yours. I never heard you mention him."

She took her place at the head of the table. She was dressed, as he had been accustomed to see her, with neatness and taste; there was no change in her appearance in that respect, yet there was a change—a change which had struck George painfully yesterday, and which, in the midst of all the agitation of today, he could not keep from noticing.

"Are you well, Mrs. Routh?" he asked her, anxiously. "Are you sure you are well? I don't like your looks."

"Never mind my looks, George," Harriet said, cheerfully; "I am very well. Get on with your breakfast and your story. Routh will be here presently, and I want to know all about it before he comes. He gets impatient at my feminine curiosity, you know."

The smile with which she spoke was but the ghost of her former smile, and George still looked at her strangely, but he obeyed her, and proceeded with his breakfast and his story.

"I don't know very much about my mother's family," he said, "because they did not like her marriage with my father, and she kept aloof from them, and her parents were dead before she had the opportunity of appeasing them by making the fine match they would have considered her marriage with Mr. Carruthers to

be. I know that some of their relatives were settled in America, some at New York, some in South Carolina, and my mother's brother, Mark Felton—queer name, puritanical and fanatical, with a touch of the association of assassination about it—was sent out to New York when quite a child. I forgot to tell you it was my mother's step-father and her mother who objected to her first marriage—her own father died when she was an infant—and on her mother's second marriage with a Mr. Creswick—a poor, proud, dissipated fellow, I fancy, though I never heard much about him—the American branch of the family sent for the boy. My mother has told me they would have taken her too, and her step-father would not have made the least objection—we haven't been lucky in step-fathers, Mrs. Routh—but her mother would not stand it; and so she kept her child. Not for many years, for she married my father when she was only seventeen. Her brother was just twenty then, and had been taken into the rich American firm of his relatives, and was a prosperous man. She knew very little of him, of course. I believe he took the same view of her marriage as her mother had taken; at all events, the first direct communication between them took place when my mother was left a handsome, and poor, young widow, with one boy, who did not make much delay about proving himself the graceless and ungrateful son you know him to have been."

George's voice faltered, and an expression of pain crossed his face. Harriet looked at him kindly, and laid her soft white hand on his.

"That is all over, you know," she said. "You will not err in that way again."

"But the consequences, Mrs. Routh, the consequences. Think of my mother *now*! However," and he drew a long breath, and threw his shoulders back, like a man who tries to shift a burden, "I must go on with my story. There's not much more to tell, however. My mother might have had a home for herself and me in her brother's house, but she could not bear dependence, and has told me often that she regarded unknown relatives as the most formidable kind of strangers. Her brother's wife made him resent my mother's determination to remain in England, and do the best she could for us both on our small means. Of course, all this was an old story long before I knew anything about it, and I fancy that it is only lately any correspondence has taken place between my mother and her brother. From this letter" (he touched the first he had read) "I can divine the nature of that correspondence. My mother," said George, sadly, "has appealed to her brother on behalf of her prodigal son, and her brother has told her his sorrows in return; they have been heavy, and in one respect not unlike her own. He, too, has an only son, and seems to find little happiness in the fact."

"Did you not know of your cousin's existence until now?" asked Harriet.

"Oh yes, I knew of it, in a kind of way; in fact, I just knew he existed, and no more. I

don't think my mother knew more. I fancy in some previous letter he told her of his wife's death, and the general unsatisfactoriness of Arthur."

"He—your uncle, I mean—is then a widower?"

"Yes," replied George. "I won't bother you with the whole of this long letter, Mrs. Routh; the gist of it is this: My cousin, Arthur Felton, is not a good son, nor a good anything I fancy, for I find my uncle congratulating my mother upon my affection for her, my good feeling, in spite of all—(bless the poor man! he little knew how his words would wound, and how ill-deserved is the extenuation!)—and prophesying all manner of good things about me. It appears this hopeful son of his has been in Europe for some months, and probably in London for some months too, as my uncle says—stay, here is the passage: 'Arthur has with him a letter of introduction to you and Mr. Carruthers, some trifles from this side of the world which I thought you might like, and my instructions to make his cousin's acquaintance as soon as possible. You speak of George as living habitually in London; I hope by this time they have met, are good friends, and are, perhaps, chumming together. I have not heard from Arthur for some time. He is a careless correspondent, and not at any time so regardful of the feelings of other people as he might be. I dare say the first intelligence I shall have of him from England, as he cannot possibly want money'—that looks bad, Mrs. Routh," said George, breaking off abruptly, and looking up at her; "that looks bad—as he cannot possibly want money, will be from you. I know you will receive him kindly, and I earnestly hope he may make a favourable impression on Mr. Carruthers." Here George left off reading the letter, and looked blankly at Harriet.

"And he has never presented himself at Poynings, has he?" she asked.

"Never, that I know of; and of course Ellen Brookes would have told me, if he had. Besides, you see this letter was late for the mail, and arrived with this other one. My mother never saw either, and they have been lying more than six weeks at Poynings."

"No doubt your cousin is still in Paris. All Americans delight in Paris. He would be in no hurry to leave Paris, depend on it, if he had no more interesting acquaintance than that of an aunt and a cousin to make in London, and as much time before him as he chose."

"I should think with you, Mrs. Routh, only that this letter, written at New York on the third of April, says my uncle had heard from Arthur, who had merely written him a line from London, saying: 'Here I am. Particulars by next mail.' The mail brought no particulars, and my uncle writes to my mother, subsequently to this long letter, which is cheerful enough, you'll observe, that he is a prey to a presentiment that something is wrong with Arthur, also that he has conceived the strongest wish to come to England and see her, and especially to

see me—that he has sufficient money and leisure to gratify the inclination—that he will wait for the chance of further intelligence of Arthur, and to arrange certain business matters, a month longer, and then come to England. He seems to have formed a remarkably elementary notion of my respected step-father's manners, customs, and general disposition, for he proposes to present himself at Poynings immediately on his arrival, and never appears to entertain the least misgiving as to the cordiality of his reception. He must have been astonished at getting no answer to either letter, and I should think must have had his presentiments considerably sharpened and strengthened by the fact."

Here George referred to the date of the later of the two letters, and exclaimed:

"By Jove! I should not be surprised if he were at Poynings now!"

At this moment Routh entered the room, and, in his turn, had the new aspect of affairs explained to him, but at no great length. He displayed very little interest in the matter, thought it very probable that Mr. Felton might have arrived in England, or even at Poynings, but did not see what George could do in that case.

"You can't go and entertain another man at a house where you haven't the entrée yourself," he said. "I suppose the old woman will let you know if he really comes to Poynings. In the mean time, send the letters on to Mr. Carruthers. You expect to get his address from some girl or other—his niece, I think I understood Harriet—and ask what is to be done. It's rather a lucky turn up, Dallas, I take it, and will help your good-boy intentions towards your step-father wonderfully, to have a rich uncle to act as a connecting-link between you. By-the-by, he's sure to set you up in life, George, and periodical literature will be robbed of a shining luminary."

George did not altogether like the tone in which all this was said. It was a little sneering, and altogether careless. Nothing was so difficult to Routh, as it always is to men of his class, as the sustained assumption of interest in any affairs but their own; and now that his anxieties of the previous day were relieved, and he had no immediate object in which Dallas was concerned, to gain, he was impatient of any interruption of his immediate pursuits, and harsh and rough with him. He sat down, and ate his breakfast hastily, while he read a heap of letters which lay beside his plate.

"I don't know, indeed," George had replied good humouredly to the speech which had jarred upon him; "but you are busy, Routh, and I won't trouble you with my business just now. Mrs. Routh and I will discuss the letter to Mr. Carruthers."

"A telegram for Mr. Dallas," said the irreproachable servant, who entered the room while George was speaking. "Please to sign this, sir."

Routh looked up from his letters, Harriet set down the teapot, and quietly taking up the slip of paper which the man had laid upon the table by George's elbow, signed it with his name,

writing it with a pencil which hung at her waist. The servant left the room, and George said :

"I was not wrong. This is from my uncle, and it comes from Amherst. He says: 'Meet me at Morley's Hotel this evening, at six.'"

"Very odd," said Routh. "Well, George, I am sure I wish you all manner of luck with your American uncle."

He had taken up his hat and gloves as he spoke, and now rang for the servant, whom he directed to call a hansom. The man went to the door, and transferred the commission to a street-boy lingering about there, who ran off, and returned in two minutes with the required vehicle. George and Routh were standing on the steps as the boy reappeared, talking. They shook hands, and Routh was stepping into the cab, when George followed him, and said, in a whisper :

"Was it not extraordinary the boy did not recognise poor Deane?"

"What boy?" said Routh, in astonishment, and stepping back on to the dayway.

"Why, that boy; the boy you always employ. He brought you my message the other day. Don't you remember it was he who brought your note to poor Deane that day at the tavern?"

"I did not remember; I did not particularly notice," said Routh. "Good-bye." And he jumped into the cab, and was driven away.

George went back into the house, eyed curiously by Jim Swain, who touched his cap as he passed.

THE DEAD LOCK IN ITALY.

A LETTER FROM AN ENGLISHMAN IN ROME, TO AN ITALIAN IN LONDON.

"You are visiting Rome for the fourth time. You have leisure at your command, you have eyes in your head, and your sympathies in the Italian question are on the liberal side. Rome is now on the eve of a change which may be felt all over Europe. Tell me, in my exile, how Rome looks."

This very natural request of yours reaches me, my good friend, on the fifteenth of November. In one calendar month from that date, the French troops are bound, under the Convention, to leave the Pope and the People to settle their differences together. Must I tell you truly how Rome looks, under these circumstances? Prepare yourself to be astonished; prepare yourself to be disappointed. Rome looks as Rome looked when I was here last, nearly four years since—as Rome looked when I was here, for the second time, eleven years since—as Rome looked, when I was here, for the first time, twenty-eight years since. New hotels have been opened, in the interval, I grant you; the Pincian Hill has been improved; a central railway station has been made; an old church has been discovered at St. Clemente; a new church has been built on the ruins of the Basilica of St. Paolo; Seltzer water is to be had; crinolines are to be seen; the hackney-coachmen have been reformed. But, I repeat, nevertheless, the

Rome that I first remember in '38 is, in all essentials, the Rome that I now see in '66. Nobody walking through the city, nobody looking at the people and the priests, would have the faintest suspicion of the change which you tell me is at hand, of the convulsion that may be coming in a month's time.

What is the secret of this extraordinary apathy? I take the secret to be, that the Roman Catholic Religion sticks fast—and that the people stick fast with it. I may be quite wrong, but the impression produced on my mind by what I have seen and heard in Italy this time is—that the Pope's position is, even yet, by no means the desperate position which the liberal newspapers represent it to be. I see three chances still for His Holiness and the Priest. First, the enormous religious influence at their disposal. Secondly, the miserable dearth (since Cavour's death) of commanding ability in the civil and military administration of the Italian Kingdom. Thirdly, the inbred national defects of the Italian character.

Don't crumple up my letter, and throw it into the fire! Don't say, "The priests have got hold of him! My friend is nothing better than a reactionary and a Jesuit after all!" No Englishman living, is a heartier friend to the Italian cause than I am. No Englishman living, desires more earnestly than I do to see this nation great, prosperous, and free, from one end of the peninsula to the other. But, there are two sides to every question—the shady side, and the bright. Italian liberals and English liberals have agreed long enough (in my opinion) to look at Italian politics on the bright side only. Give the shady side its turn. When an individual man is in a difficulty, it is universally admitted that his best preparation for getting out of it, is, to look the worst in the face. What is true of individuals, in this case, is surely true of nations—doubly true, I venture to think, of your nation. Suffer a barbarous Englishman to speak the rude truth. The very last thing you are any of you willing to do, is, to look the worst in the face. Give me your arm, and let us look at it together.

You have been twenty years in England; you are almost—though, fortunately for my chance of convincing you, not quite—an Englishman. Have you noticed, in the time during which you have inhabited my country, what the religious influence can do, applied to purely political and purely worldly objects? Why, even in my country, where Religion expressly assumes to leave thought free, and to let men decide for themselves—the so-called religious influence, applied to political and social ends, fights from a vantage-ground in the minds of the masses of mankind equally above the reach of reason and of right.

If the (always so-called) religious influence can do this in England, what sort of enemy have you Italians to deal with, in the religious influence of Rome? You have a system against you here, which for generation after generation, and century after century, has put the priest before

the people with his hand held out, and the one everlasting formula on his lips: "Let me think for you, and I will take you to heaven." For generation after generation, and for century after century, the people have taken the priest's hand on those terms. The greatest of human writers, the noblest of human beliefs—patience under worldly trials, consolation under afflictions, the most sacred domestic ties, the very ledge of immortality itself—have all been held through century after century, for millions and millions of your people, in the priest's hand. In the priest's hand they are held still—and you have got him against you.

Yes! here, in his central stronghold, the priest's immovable composure has its old foundation, to this day, in the priest's consciousness of his power. The political tyranny that he administers—the infamous misgovernment that he permits—has alienated you, and thousands of men like you. But he has got your wives and your daughters; he has got the influence of the mothers over the children, and the other stronger influence yet of the women over the men. Nay, to come to individual instances of note and mark, he has even got your King. It is notorious to everybody out of England—though it has been carefully concealed in England—that there is a religious side to Victor Emmanuel's character, as well as a political side, and that he presents to this day the curiously anomalous phenomenon of a zealous Papist who is in disgrace with the Pope.

But I am drifting into general considerations, and am forgetting that it is my business to give you the results of my own personal observations, such as they are.

I have attended more than one of the Catholic church-services on Sundays. I have walked again and again over those remoter quarters of Rome in which the life of the people shows itself most strikingly and unrestrainedly to strangers. Go where I may, I see no change in the congregations, since my first experience of them; I discover no such phenomenon as threatening attitude among the people. Last Sunday morning, I went to a "solemn function" at the church of St. Martin; then, to St. Peter's, to Vespers, and Catechism in the afternoon; then, all through the Trastevere, where all the people were out enjoying the lovely sunshine; then, back again, across the river, and round about another populous quarter, to another "solemn function." In all this peregrination I looked carefully for any signs of a change anywhere, and saw none. The church ceremonies were as superb and as impressive as ever, and the congregations (the men included, mind) just as numerous and just as devout. Four years since, I saw the catechising at St. Peter's—the boys openly taught under one of the aisles, and the girls secretly taught behind a screen, under another. On that occasion I noticed that the girls all respectfully kissed the priest's hand when they came out from the screen, and were dismissed. There was the whole thing, last Sunday, going on again as usual—the much-enduring boys kicking their

legs on the forms, and the nicely trained girls crowding round the priest to kiss his hand as they went out. In the whole Trastevere, when I walked through it afterwards—in all that turbulent ultra-Roman quarter of Rome—I doubt if there were a soul in-doors. Were the men cursing in corners, and the terrified women trying to moderate them? The men were playing the favourite Roman game of "morra" in corners—the men were smoking and laughing—the men were making love to their sweet-hearts—the men went out of the way into the mud, at a place where a cardinal's carriage was standing as an obstacle on the drier ground, without a wry look or a savage word in any case. The women, in their Sunday best—the magnificent Roman women of the people—sat gossiping and nursing their children, as composedly as if they lived under the most constitutional monarchy in the world. If they had been English women, and had "known their blessings," they could not have looked more comfortable—nor, I will add (though it is treason in an Englishman to find any beauty out of his own country), could they have looked handsomer. Do you remember, when you were in Rome, devout female individuals stopping a cardinal out for his walk, to kiss the ring on his forefinger? I saw a devout female individual stop a cardinal, yesterday, for this extraordinary purpose, in a public thoroughfare. The cardinal took it as a matter of course, and the people took it as a matter of course, just as they did in your time.

Don't misunderstand me, in what I am now writing. I am not foolish enough to deny that there is discontent in Rome, because I don't find it coming to the surface. I don't for a moment doubt that there is serious and savage discontent—though I firmly believe it to be confined to the class (the special class, here and everywhere) which is capable of feeling a keen sense of wrong. More than this, I am even ready to believe that "the Roman committee" can raise a revolution, if it please, on the day when the French leave Rome. But granted the discontent, and granted the revolution, I am afraid there is a power here which will survive the one, and circumvent the other. I see the certainty of possessing that power in reserve in the unchanged attitude of the priests; and I see the foundation on which the conviction of the priests rests, in the unchanged attitude of the people. You know the old story of the man who had been so long in prison that he had lost all relish of liberty, and who, when they opened the doors for him at last, declined to come out. When you open the door here, I hope—but I confess I find it hard to believe—that you will find the Roman people ready to come out.

So much for the first and foremost of the chances in favour of the Pope; the chance that the immense religious influence at his command will prove too strong for you. Observe (before we get on) how boldly and openly he is meeting you with that influence already, on your own ground. You know that the form of Christianity of which he is the head, is the one form that

really adapts itself to the Italian temperament; and you leave the spiritual interests of the people at his sole disposal, while you take the material interests into your own hands. What does he do upon this? He declares, with the whole force of his authority and position, that his spiritual rights and his temporal rights are indivisible, and that respect for the one means respect for the other. View this declaration as a political assertion, and the absurdity of it is beneath notice. Pronounced by the Pope, it becomes an article of Faith. "You take your religion from Me," says His Holiness. "*That* is part of your religion." What is the answer to this from the life of the faithful—not in Rome only, but all over the civilised globe? The answer from hundreds of thousands of otherwise intelligent people, having their influence on public opinion, is—"Amen!"

The second of the chances in the Pope's favour; the present dearth of commanding ability in the civil and military administration of the Italian Kingdom; needs no discussion here, for it admits of no denial. To enlarge on this part of the subject, after the events of the late war, would be almost equivalent to reproaching Italy with her misfortunes. God forbid I should do that! May you yet find the men who can lead your brave army and your brave navy as they deserve to be led! May you yet find the men who can hold out to the discontented, disunited, degraded people of the southern provinces the hand strong enough to help them up, the hand that can rule! Here, at least, we may hope for Italy, with some assurance that we are not hoping in vain. The nation that produced Cavour, the nation that possesses Garibaldi, must surely have its reserves of strength still left.

If you were not a northern Italian, I should feel some difficulty in approaching the last of the three points of view from which I look at the Papal Obstacle standing in your way. Fortunately for my purpose, you are not a Tuscan or a Roman—for it is precisely in the radical defects of the Tuscan and the Roman characters that I see the last of the three chances which the weakness of Italy still offers to the cause of the Pope.

The two striking defects of your countrymen, so far as a stranger can see them, appear to me to be: first, their apparent incapability of believing in truth; secondly, their want of moral fibre and nerve in the smaller affairs of life. The first of these defects presents the Italian to me in the aspect of a man who cannot be persuaded that I am telling the truth about the simplest matter conceivable, so long as he sees under the surface an object which I *might* gain by telling a lie. The second of these defects shows me my Italian fellow-pilgrim along the road of life, in the character of a man who, whenever he finds a stone in his path, skirts lazily round it, and leaves it to the traveller behind him, instead of lifting his foot and kicking it, once for all, out of the way. These are both (to my mind) dangerous national failings. The first lowers the public standard of

honour, and does incalculable mischief in that way. The second leaves your countrymen without the invaluable check on all nuisances, abuses, and injustices, of a public opinion to discuss, and a public voice to resent them. There is gain, my friend, certain gain and certain strength here, for the cause of bad government all the world over.

Let me illustrate what I mean, by one or two examples, before I close my letter.

Not long ago, a certain mistake (the pure result of hurry and carelessness) was made in conducting the business of a certain English Legation. Some consternation was felt when the error was discovered, for it might have ended in awkward results. But the caprices of Chance are proverbial. An unforeseen turn of circumstance placed the Legation in the lucky position of having blundered, after all, in the right direction: a diplomatic advantage was thus accidentally gained, by a fortunate diplomatic error. A friend of mine (himself in the diplomatic service) was a few days afterwards in the company of several Italian gentlemen; all of them men of education and position; some of them men of note and mark in politics. On entering the room, my friend, to his astonishment, found himself eagerly surrounded, and complimented in the warmest terms on the extraordinary capacity of his Chief. It was almost a pleasure, your polite countrymen said, to be overreached in such an extremely clever manner. The Englishman, as soon as he could make himself heard, attempted to put the matter in its true light. It all originated, he declared, in a mistake. The Italians smiled, and shook their heads with the most charming courtesy and good humour. "Cave! cave!" they remonstrated. "You have outwitted us; but, my dear sir, we are not downright fools. The 'mistake' has done its work. You may drop the mistake!" The Englishman declared, on his word of honour, that the true explanation was the explanation he had given. The Italians bowed resignedly, and left him. To this day they are persuaded that the mistake was made on purpose. To this day they admire my friend as a master in the art of solemn false assertion for diplomatic ends.

This little incident is trivial enough in itself, I grant you; but pursue the inveterate belief in deceit that it exhibits, into the daily affairs of life, on the one hand, and into serious political emergencies on the other, and tell me if you do, or do not, see some of your domestic scandals and some of your ministerial complications under a new light.

Take your railroads again, as illustrating some of those other defects in the national character which I have ventured to point out. In Northern Italy, the railroad is excellently managed: in Northern Italy the railroad has taught the people the value of time. Advance through Tuscany, and go on to Rome, and I hardly know which would surprise and disgust you most—the absolute laziness of the official people in working the line, or the absolute sub-

mission of the passengers under the most inexcusable and the most unnecessary delays. I arrived at the capital of the kingdom of Italy by the train which they called an express. There were surprisingly few passengers, and there were only some six or eight barrow-loads of luggage. The porters—and there were quite enough of them—occupied half an hour, by my watch, in transporting the baggage from the van to the receiving-room. I never saw men lounge as those Florentine porters lounged; I never saw inspectors stand and do nothing, as those Florentine inspectors stood and did nothing; and I never saw travellers take the exasperating and disgraceful indolence of the people paid to serve them, as the Italian travellers took it. Two men protested—two men were angry. One was a Frenchman, the other was your obedient servant.

Going on once more towards Rome (but not yet, mind, out of the kingdom of Italy), we were kept waiting three-quarters of an hour for the arrival of a branch train. Three impatient men got out, and walked up and down the dominions of Victor Emmanuel, fuming. Again, the Frenchman; again, your obedient servant, and another Englishman. And what did the free Italians do? They sat talking and smoking in the sweetest of tempers. The perfect composure of the engine-driver, the stoker, and the guards, was more than matched by the perfect composure of the native passengers. Late or early, in the train or out of the train, *oh dolce far niente*, how nice you are, and how dearly we love you! See the Frenchman grinding his teeth, and hear the Englishmen with their national "Damn!" What a fever is in the blood of these northern people, and what lives the poor guards and engine-drivers must lead in those restless northern lands! Here comes the train, before the fourth quarter of an hour is out—what would you have more? Has any accident happened? Nothing has happened. We have somehow lost three-quarters of an hour on the road, to-day; you somehow lost an hour on the road yesterday. *Ma che?* After all, we are going on to Rome. We go on. Night and darkness overtake us. The train stops, without a vestige of a station or a lamp visible anywhere in the starlight. A lonely little maid, with a little basket, appears, drifting dimly along the line, and crying "Medlars! medlars! buy my medlars!" Have we stopped to give this poor child a chance of picking up some coppers? Send her this way directly; let us buy the whole basket-full, and give the little maid a kiss, and go on to Rome. My head is out of the window; my hand is in my pocket. A gendarme appears, and the little maid vanishes. "Be so obliging," the gendarme says, "as to come out and be fumigated." I tell him I have come from Florence; I tell him there is no cholera at Florence; I tell him I have got a clean bill of health from Florence. The gendarme waits till I have done, and replies, "Be so obliging as to come out and be fumigated." Everybody else has already got out to be fumigated. I hear the

Frenchman in the darkness; his language is not reproducible. First class, second class, third class, we grope our way, without artificial light of any sort to help us, up the side of a hill, and all tumble into a shed. A soldier closes the door on us; a white smoke rises from the floor, and curls feebly about the people who are near it. Human fustiness and chloride of lime contend for the mastery; human fustiness, if my nose be to be trusted, has the best of it. Half a minute (certainly not more) passes, and the door is suddenly opened again; we are all fumigated; we may go on to Rome. No, we may not. The passports must be examined next. In any other country in the world, one stoppage would have been made to serve the two purposes. In Italy, two stoppages take place. As we jog on again, I consult my official guide to find out when we are due in Rome. The guide says 9 p.m. An experienced traveller tells me the guide is wrong—the hour is 8 p.m. A second traveller produces another guide—the hour is so ill printed that nobody can read it. I appeal to a guard, when we stop at the next station. "In Heaven's name, when do we get to Rome?" In the gentlest possible manner he replies, "Have patience, sir." I catch the vice of patience from the guard, and it ends in our getting to Rome before midnight. Next morning I try to find out, in various well-informed quarters, whether there is a public opinion of any sort or kind to resent and reform such absurdities as I have here, in all good humour, tried to describe. I can find out no such thing as a public opinion. I can find out no such thing as the nerve and fibre out of which a public opinion is made. Abuses which have nothing to do with politics, abuses which are remediable even under the Pope himself, encounter no public condemnation and no public resistance. Is it wonderful that the King of Naples still persists in waiting for his turn of luck? Can you call the "Catholic party" absolutely demented, if the "Catholic party" believe that the cards may yet change hands?

My letter is ended. All that is to be written and said, on the other side of the question, has been written and said, over and over again, already. The ungracious task of finding out your faults, and of stopping to look for the pitfalls that lie in your way, is now, to the best of my ability and within my narrow limits, a task performed. For the rest, time will show how far I am right, and how far I am wrong.

Meanwhile, I beg you will not do me the injustice to suppose that I have lost hope in the future of Italy. I have said what I have ventured to say, because I believe in the sincere resolution of the best among you to rouse the worst among you, and to show them, if it lie in human power, the way to advancement and reform. A man who honestly tells another man of his faults has some hope in that man, or he would hold his tongue. Distrust the flatterers and the enthusiasts—see the difficulties still before you, as the difficulties really are. When your people have had their Venetian holiday, send them

mercilessly to school. For the future, let us have less throwing up of caps, and more throwing up of arable land—less illumination of houses, and more illumination of brains—the industry of an united people (which you have not got yet), in place of the acclamations of an united people (of which you have had more than enough). In plainer English still, do the work first, and shout over it afterwards. On the day when Italy has learnt that lesson, you will be too strong for the Pope, and you will be a free people.

M.D.

Is it better for the interests of both sexes, and for their wholesome influence in this world of ours—is it better, after all, that Eve should of right assume the letters M.D. as signifying My Dear, or My Doctor?

A lady dressed in a short black silk tunic, reaching a little below the knees, the skirts falling close to the figure like those of a man's frock-coat, wearing, moreover, a pair of black cloth trousers, and having flowers in her hair, presents an appearance which is likely to be regarded by the benighted inhabitants of this country with something of astonishment, and something also of disapproval. Yet on a certain evening in November, in this year 1866, the American lady physician, Dr. Mary E. Walker, had the courage to stand upon a platform in the great St. James's Hall, dressed in such costume, and to deliver a lecture to an exceedingly large, and, for the most part—I am sorry to say—an exceedingly ill-behaved, audience.

Those who read the newspapers know already something about this lecture. It was to be, said the advertisements, an account of the experiences which this lady had passed through; first, when a student at the Medical Lyceum; secondly, when engaged in private practice as an ordinary physician; thirdly, during her attendance on sick and wounded soldiers engaged in the late American war. The public already knows how this lecture—partly an autobiographical narrative, partly a statement of very advanced opinions on the threadbare subject of woman's mission—was received. A large section of the audience came to the St. James's Hall, not to listen, not to judge, but to condemn, and that in a very rude and shocking manner.

It is not to be concealed that there was plenty for the large section to condemn, only they need not have done it brutally. There was much to condemn, much to laugh at, much to deplore, and something withal to admire. It was impossible not to condemn the egotism and vanity constantly displayed as the lecturer went on; impossible not to laugh at the verbal and other absurdities by which the lecture was continually disfigured; impossible not to deplore the perversion of rare zeal and unflagging energy whose existence was indicated throughout the whole narration; equally impossible to withhold one's admiration from the courage, the

perseverance, and the self-denial, which had enabled this lady to go through so much that was tiresome and revolting to a woman's nature: not forgetting what she had to undergo on this very occasion, the first night of her appearing before a London audience.

Many persons know through actual experience, and many more by means of what they have read, something of the exceedingly florid nature of American oratory. In this respect our learned doctor was very strong. "I had no Pillar of Fire to light me, no Jacob's Ladder by which to climb to my object, NO THAMES TUNNEL TO PASS UNDER, NO ATLANTIC CABLE TO GO THROUGH." She had been speaking of the difficulties she had had to encounter in the course of her enterprise, and of the small means of helping herself she had had at her disposal. This tremendous sentence came quite at the beginning of the lecture, and there was another near the end, which was, perhaps, equally flowery and equally intelligible. "If," said the lecturer, with one hand raised on high, "if we could look into the Future with the telescope of Faith, and read upon its walls, inscribed in golden letters, the issue of our endeavours—who would not?"—the rest escaped me. For, I was making a note of the extraordinary words I had just heard, and what the "who" at the end of the above sentence would do, or would not do, when he found himself with the "Telescope of Faith" at his eye, and the writing on the "walls of the Future" exposed to his gaze, must, I fear, remain unexplained.

"How I did wish that I could wear a short dress!" said Dr. Walker, in the course of a retrospective view of her medical career at the Lyceum, where she took her degree. And this fervent aspiration was continually repeated as she advanced from stage to stage in her professional course. The long skirts were for ever in her way. How could she operate, how dissect, how whisk in and out of the inevitable brougham, and rush off round the corner to a patient in a hurry, with a crinoline and a train for ever impeding the freedom of her movements? When she was a little girl, under fourteen years of age, she wore short petticoats, and was happy. Men wore no petticoats at all, and were happy. Dr. Walker was very strong indeed upon this petticoat question. She said in so many words: "Long dresses are killing women," she did not say how; but she asserted the fact, and a chilling silence followed the remark. Perhaps the different members of the audience were speculating as to how the extra breadth did their full work, and in what manner the coup de grace was finally inflicted. Perhaps they were summing up in their minds the number of octogenarian spinsters of their acquaintance, on whom the noxious influences of voluminous drapery had failed hitherto to take effect. There seemed to be a general feeling that some explanation was desirable, but none was forthcoming. The lecturer was busy with the practical side of her subject. She discoursed on the various lengths, or rather shortnesses, of

skirt which were reconcilable with the principles of physiology and hygiene, and went into many abstruse speculations as to the fitness or unfitness of white pantalettes for female medical wear. She had favoured them strongly at one time, she said; but had been obliged finally to abandon them on account of the mud. Her present costume was so convenient and so easily managed, that, during her professional career, sick people would frequently send for her at night, rather than for a male practitioner, because "she could get ready so much quicker."

The superior advantage enjoyed by men in all matters connected with costume seemed to rankle a little in the bosom of our learned lady. She was continually instituting comparisons between the two sexes, in connexion with this part of her subject. "Men do not look horrible," she said, "because they don't wear stays and petticoats." And again: "Men have not one corner of their brains always occupied with the skirt of a dress." According to Dr. Walker's theory, that part of a lady's dress which is below the knee is for ever on her mind. Be the circumstances by which she is surrounded what they may, she has always one eye fixed on this particular portion of her costume, watching lest some unknown ill should befall it. It is a painful reflection this, and pleads trumpet-tongued for the general adoption of Bloomerism. Let the reader—the young reader especially—bear this revelation of the doctor's in mind. When he makes an offer of his hand and heart to the beloved object, and observes upon her countenance an expression of perplexity, which he naturally connects with the words he has just uttered, let him conclude that it is the consciousness of something wrong with that lower skirt, by which the maiden is agitated. Her lover's muddy boot is no doubt trampling upon her new poplin—and she knows it. "Anything she had succeeded in doing," said the doctor, winding up this section of her subject, "she had been able to do through having worn short dresses;" and, indeed, these mutilated skirts, and their numerous advantages, were introduced continually throughout the lecture, a propos of anything—sometimes, of nothing.

It was curious to observe that, with all her strength of mind, this lady had not been above making some concessions to that decorative instinct which is supposed to spring for ever in the female breast. Those shortened skirts, of which so much has been said, were decorated with velvet trimming: a sort of sash constructed of broad black ribbon was fastened in a large bow at the lady's back. She wore, moreover, a lace collar and white kid gloves, and—greatest concession of all—had a wreath of flowers in her hair.

The doctor had a curious sudden way of coming out with certain remarks, which always seemed to set her hearers laughing. One aphorism spoken in this manner, "Long dresses are killing women," has already been mentioned, but not the abrupt manner in which the words

were brought out, and which had something indescribably odd about it. The audience, however were most amused when the doctor, taking advantage of a dead pause—one of the few moments of quiet accorded to her by that very noisy company—remarked in a calm clear tone: "I have frequently extracted teeth."

"You lose all the beauty of this lecture," said the doctor, irritated by the frequent interruptions to which she was subjected, "when you only allow me to say one or two words at a time; it is quite impossible but that the effect of what I have to say must be lost." In one way or other, our physician managed to say a good many things which indicated a high appreciation of her own qualities. She told us that she had a decided look, as indeed she had, and that her father went with her to the university to start her there, well knowing that she would certainly carry through, the thing she had once begun. She mentioned, moreover, that such was her influence among the soldiery, and such their opinion of her opinion, that the wounded (wounded) men would never submit to amputation until she had pronounced it to be indispensable. It was while dwelling upon this part of her subject that the unfortunate anecdote about the dying man who extended his arms towards her, and implored her "to kiss him twice," came to be related. A story partly absurd, partly terrible, but certainly teaching the very plain lesson to every one who hears it, that, whatever may be said for or against the fitness of women to act medically in cases where women and children are concerned, their being of use to men in this way is a thing entirely out of the question. Dr. Mary Walker—to do her justice—seemed herself to see this part of the subject in its true light, always giving herself out as a physician for women and children only.

Altogether, it does not seem as if the vexed question whether women are fit or unfit for such occupations as doctoring, and the like, was brought nearer to a solution by such a lecture as this. Looking in a philosophical spirit upon this exhibition at the St. James's Hall, it was impossible to resist an ever-recurring conviction that, whatever might be the real mission of women, whatever might be the right view or the wrong view of their business upon the earth, this, at least, that we had come to see, was all wrong from beginning to end. No one could look at that figure standing at the reading-desk, dressed in those unbecoming and ungraceful garments, and fail to perceive that *that* was wrong. Whatever view of a woman's legitimate function in the world, involved such a mistake as that, was unquestionably a wrong view. There was, clearly, one outrageous error in judgment here; and it was difficult to resist the conclusion that it was not a solitary one. That slight frail woman fighting, with her weak voice, against the common sense and verdict of mankind, was fearfully eloquent in pleading against herself. It did not look right, somehow, that the weak lady should be so com-

bative, and have her hand against all the world. It seemed, too, always to have been so. In her own country, where she had first announced her intention of entering upon a medical course, she had met with nothing but opposition from her own country-people. The professors said that they should feel a certain awkwardness in delivering their anatomical and other medical lectures in the presence of a lady; while, of the students, some threatened to abandon the school if she remained in it, and others asked, with more bluntness than courtesy: "What business ladies had in Lyceums?" (The doctor mentioned this fact quite frankly to her audience, to their great and unequivocal delight.)

Always fighting, always with the world against her! When she adopted that peculiar dress, the women were her opponents, as the men had been in the Lyceum school. She had set the men against her by her first exploit—a thing not often done by a woman; and by her next, she had awakened the animosity and disapproval of her own sex, and had come to number its members also among her heartiest opponents. A miserable and unnatural life this lady's, surely! For though we are most of us ready to admit that it may fall to the lot of a *man*, through no fault of his own, to go through the world always with the harness on his back and the sword in his hand, yet do we all feel that such a life would be most terrible and unseemly for a *woman* to lead.

This was a painful exhibition, then, from beginning to end. Painful—whether one was occupied in considering the position of the lady who played "the part" of the evening, or in studying the behaviour of the audience which had been brought to visit St. James's Hall on this occasion, by the rumour of something new under the sun at last. It is so much the custom in this country, just now, to be exceedingly lenient in speaking of those forms of ill behaviour which are common among us—even the outrageous and intolerable class called "roughs" being spoken of with a strange toleration—that one is scarcely surprised to find, in some of the published accounts of the first appearance of this American lady, the positive ferocity of a certain portion of the audience, described as "good humour." It was surely the strangest good humour ever seen. If to hoot and howl at a perfectly defenceless person, condemning her unheard, according to her much such a reception as we give to our more atrocious criminals on their way to the police-court—if this be looked upon as an evidence of good humour, it becomes a curious speculation what sort of thing the *ill* humour of an audience may be.

The persons who filled the gallery at the end of the room, had evidently come there, in vulgar parlance, for a "lark." But they would have done better to remember that it was a lark at a woman's expense. As she stood alone in the vast assembly, one could not help feeling that there was a mute appeal in her weakness and helplessness which made the determined opposition with which she was met by her relentless

persecutors, and which resounded noisily through the whole building before she appeared, emphatically—a Shame!

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE MURDER OF MR. WILLIAM WEARE, OF LYON'S INN.

ABOUT half-past one o'clock on Friday, the 24th of October, 1823, Mr. William Weare—a not very reputable attorney, bill-discounter, and gambler; in person, a little dressy, dark, flashy man, with high cheek-bones, and whiskers growing towards the corners of his mouth, who had chambers at No. 2, Lyon's Inn, second floor—took a hasty dinner preliminary to going down on a little shooting-excursion for three days with his notorious friend, Mr. John Thurtell, well known at Epsom and in the betting ring, to a lonely cottage about fourteen miles from London, on the St. Alban's-road.

Having packed up in a carpet-bag five shirts, six pair of socks, a shooting-jacket, with a whistle at the button-hole, leggings, a pair of breeches, a pair of laced-up boots, a pair of Wellington boots, and a backgammon-board to amuse himself with a quiet game after the day's shooting, he put his double-barrelled gun in its woollen case, and got down his double-caped box coat from its nail ready for a start. Then slipping easily on a new olive-coloured coat and a buff waistcoat, he re-tied his plaid handkerchief, threw his long double-gold chain round his neck, put on his diamond ring, and deposited his gold hunter's watch in the pocket of his buff waistcoat, with a steel chain to still further secure it, placed his old companion, an ivory-handled penknife, in his other pocket, slid a pad of bank-notes, with an old gambler's cautiousness, into a secret pocket in his flannel waistcoat, shook out a clean yellow silk handkerchief, then rang the bell for his laundress, Mary Maloney, to fetch a hackney-coach for him from the Strand, at the Spotted Dog. The coach came about three o'clock to the end of Holywell-street, Mr. Weare slamming the door of No. 2 behind him, came out first, carrying the gun. The laundress followed with the bag, and off drove the coach to the corner of St. Martin's-lane, where the fare alighted and paid a visit in Spring-gardens. Finally he alighted at the corner of Cumberland-street and the New-road.

In the mean time, Mr. Joseph Hunt, a public singer of bad reputation, had been about three o'clock to the White Lion Inn, in the yard of the Golden Cross, Charing-cross, and hired an iron-grey horse, with a blaze on his face, and white legs. A dark green gig was obtained from Mr. Cross, in Whitcomb-street. About five o'clock he drove to the Coach and Horses, 16, Conduit-street, and Mr. Thurtell, who lodged there, got in and drove off alone, Hunt having first carefully put under the seat a large sack which he had that morning bought in St. Giles's, probably for putting game into. At Padding-

ton-turnpike, Thurtell picked up a companion, at a little past five o'clock.

About twenty minutes before seven, Thomas Wilson, one of the mounted horse-police, on his way towards London, at the top of Harp Hill, near Edgware, met two gentlemen in drab great-coats, driving a grey horse with a white face furiously, and on the wrong side of the road. When they came near him, he shouted, "Bow-street patrol," and asked them why they drove at such a rate. One of them answered, "Good night, patrol," and drove on.

A quarter of an hour later, Thurtell and his friend stopped at the White Lion, Edgware; giving their horse a feed, and themselves some grog. Clarke, the landlord, who knew Thurtell well, was driving home with his wife in a taxed cart from King's Langley, and met the gig near the ninth milestone. Thurtell was shouting at the time, "Yaep, yaep," to a stage-coach with lights, which was in the middle of the road, and he had to pass it on the wrong side. Clarke recognised his voice. There was a bag in the front of the gig.

The landlord had scarcely reached his house before he heard some one calling in the road, and found another horse and gig which he knew as belonging to Probert, a spirit merchant, of infamous character and a fraudulent bankrupt, who lived at the cottage to which Thurtell and his friend were bound. Probert and Hunt were in it. While they were drinking a glass of brandy-and-water, Clarke said to them as he stood by the gig:

"This matter of Thurtell, I think, will turn out a bad business;"—alluding to a charge against Thurtell and his brother Thomas for defrauding the County Fire Office of one thousand nine hundred pounds by burning down a silk warehouse, to avoid which charge they were then in hiding at the Coach and Horses, in Conduit-street.

"Oh no," said Hunt; "it's all nonsense. Here, look at this."

He then took out a newspaper and a letter from Thomas Thurtell, and gave them to the publican to read. While Clarke was reading, Hunt jumped out of the gig, came into the bar, and he and Probert took another glass of brandy-and-water. They then drove off.

About eight o'clock, Mrs. Smith, a farmer's wife and child, and Elizabeth Osborne, a labourer's wife, their nurse, were driving home in a donkey-chaise (the farmer himself walking) down a lane which leads from Batler's Green to the high road between Iligh Cross and Radlet. The moon had not yet risen, and the country people were chattering pleasantly about the drive and the visit they had just made, when Elizabeth Osborne suddenly cried out:

"God bless me, that's a gun gone off, is it not?"

Mr. Smith said, "Yes; stop the chaise!"

They all listened. To their horror, there came through the darkness across the field from Gill's Hill-lane deep groans, as if some one had met with an accident. The good-natured farmer said:

"I will run across and see; it is somewhere near Philip my brother's turnip-field gate."

"Pray don't," said the alarmed wife. "Don't go; perhaps they will shoot you."

"Pooh!" said the farmer; "if any one has shot a person, he is gone before now."

Just then, as they still listened, they heard several voices and a gig or cart move, and Mrs. Osborne said to the farmer's wife:

"Thank God, there is some one coming to his assistance, for I can hear talking. The man is not dead. His groans get further off. I think he is walking."

The gig, or cart, as they thought, then seemed to go on towards Gill's Hill. They still stopped listening, but heard no more groans; as they drove on, Mrs. Smith said:

"It is a very odd thing a gun going off." Her husband, dismissing the affair from his easy-going mind, remarked:

"I dare say it is some of those Gill's Hill people. They're sky-larking to frighten people."

The moon was just rising when the party got to Mr. Smith's at a little past eight, brightening peacefully over the trees and hedgerows, yellow and thinned by autumn.

About a quarter before eight, James Addis, the (boy) groom at Mr. Probert's cottage, hearing the wheels of a gig, ran out, thinking it was his master, but found that it was only something that had driven by very fast towards Batler's Green. About the same time, James Freeman, a labourer, living near Probert's, going to Gill's Hill-lane to meet his wife and bring her home, saw two gentlemen in a gig beyond Probert's. The moon was not then up, but it was starlight. At an elbow of the lane, one of the gentlemen, in a light, long great-coat (probably Thurtell), got out, and Freeman spoke to him about his horse being so distressed. He was fumbling in his breast-pocket, but he made no answer.

Near nine o'clock there came a sharp ring at the Gill's Hill Cottage, and Addis, going out, found Mr. John Thurtell there *alone*, standing at his horse's head, which was turned towards London. He told Addis to take the horse and gig in, but to touch nothing, while he went to meet Mr. Probert. While Addis was rubbing the horse down, Thurtell returned, and asked if he had attended to the horse. There was a carpet-bag in the gig, and a gun stuck in the folds of the leather apron. In about three-quarters of an hour Probert and Hunt arrived, with Thurtell hanging on behind.

Mrs. Probert and her sister, Miss Noyes, came down-stairs to welcome the visitors. Mr. Hunt, being a stranger, was formally introduced to the ladies. Probert having brought a loin of pork from London, some of the chops were cooked for supper. While these were getting ready, Probert told the ladies that they were going out to Mr. Nicholl's, a neighbouring farmer and road-surveyor, to get leave for a day's shooting. They returned about eleven to supper, Hunt and Probert eating heartily, but Thurtell, when the chops cut red and underdone, seemed to have lost his appetite, and said that he felt unwell. After supper, when the spirits and water

were produced, Hunt sang several songs, and Thurtell produced a richly chased gold hunting-watch, and, taking off the chain, said it was more fit for a lady, and offered it to Probert for his wife. Probert declining it, Thurtell put it round the lady's neck with his own hands. The ladies retired between twelve and one. The sleeping accommodation was limited, as Thurtell's nieces were staying in the house; so that Hunt arranged to sleep on the sofa, and Thurtell on some chairs.

In the course of the evening, Thurtell had asked Addis, the groom, for a pail of water, and had sponged some spots out of the collar of his coat. He had also been into the kitchen, and, with a knife, cut off the chain from his watch.

Several other still more singular occurrences took place that October night. Mrs. Probert felt suspicious of the visitors, and alarmed at their ways and mysterious snatches of talk. A vague and horrid alarm and fear filled her mind. When Mrs. Probert retired to bed, soon after twelve, and Miss Noyes had closed her door, she stole to the head of the stairs, and leaned cautiously over the banisters to listen. The talk in the parlour was in a whisper, growing louder and more audible at intervals. Her husband and the unexpected visitors were in conversation. One said: "I think that will fit you very well," as if trying on clothes. There was then a noise of papers rustling on the table, and the crunching of paper thrown into the fire.

Hunt said: "Let us take five pounds each."

Another voice then said: "We had a hare made us a present of coming along; it was thrown up in the gig on the cushion. We must tell that to the boy in the morning."

Another voice said: "We had better be off to town by four or five o'clock in the morning."

John Thurtell replied: "We had better not go before eight or nine o'clock, the usual time."

After a pause, Thurtell remarked: "What is the matter, Probert? you seem down in the mouth; your wife is a-bed and asleep hours ago. There is no one who has heard or seen anything this night; indeed, we must not split."

The frightened woman then stole back up into her room, closed the door, and waited for further sounds. A few minutes afterwards the glass doors of the parlour opened, and two of the men went to the stable with a light. Hunt held the light, and another brought the horse. Then they opened the yard gate, and let the horse out. Some time after this, Mrs. Probert, looking out of her dressing-room window, heard a noise in a walk called "The Dark Walk," from the shrubs that hemmed it in, and saw (it being a fine moonlight night) a short man dragging something large and heavy in a sack out of the Dark Walk towards the pond. There was a hollow sound, like a heap of stones thrown into a pit.

When Probert came to bed, about two o'clock, he found, to his sorrow, his wife sitting still undressed and crying. He said: "Why, I thought you were in bed."

She said to him: "Good God! what have you been about? What have I seen to-night?"

What have you been doing—you three? You have been counting money, burning papers, and dragging something heavy along the garden."

Probert replied:

"Don't make yourself uneasy, Betsy; you have only seen the netting; we have been trying to get some game, but there were five gamekeepers out."

Why was the horse let out of the stable? Oh, only to carry the netting.

Early on Saturday morning, two labourers, named Hunt and Herrington, were repairing Gill's Hill-lane, for Mr. Nicholls, of Batler's Green, the surveyor of the highway. It was a bright crystalline October morning, the yellow leaves drifting gently and silently down on the narrow lane and the wiry hedges, as the men plied pick and spade, and plastered and tossed up the mire from the deep wheel-ruts, where the leaves had gathered; on the half-dry road the black leaves were printed by nature's printing, and the cold dew stood in thick drops on the coarse roadside grass. Two gentlemen passed them on foot; one was a short man of a dark complexion, and with large black whiskers, the other taller, dressed in a dark coat and a white hat. One of the men remembered having seen the short dark man down there before during the summer. They were a queer suspicious lot of London chaps, a drinking, noisy, gambling lot, at Gill's Hill Cottage, they knew, coming down at suspicious times and leaving in a suspicious way, so the two men, looking up sullenly from their work, eyed them with curiosity and distrust. They passed without speaking, and about ten poles' distance from the labourers stopped at the side of the left-hand hedge at the bend of the lane, and stooped down "grabbling," as if for something they had lost, among the rustling leaves and half-stripped brambles. They then walked a little further, and came back to where Hunt was busy with his spade. "Good morning, sir," said Hunt to the taller man in the bruised white hat.

"You are going to widen this lane, are you not?" said the tall man.

Hunt replied, "I am going to try and widen it where I can, but I am going to trim it up all through."

The tall man said, "It is a d——nasty place, it is as dark as the grave. As I was coming up here last evening, I was capsized out of my gig."

"Did you hurt yourself, sir?"

"No, but I lost a silk handkerchief and a small penknife. I have found them both. I didn't hurt myself or my horse?"

"Was the gig broken?"

"No, the gig did not fall over, nor did the horse fall."

"That is a very queer thing to me, sir, that you should be capsized and your gig not fall."

The two gentlemen then went up the lane towards the cottage, leaving the labourers to their speculations on gig accidents and the queer lot at Probert's.

When the men were at breakfast some time afterwards, Herrington took his bread and

cheese in his hand, and strolled to the spot where the two gentlemen had been looking. Brushing the leaves away, he found a small penknife with the blade open and covered with blood; a little further on, a pistol with hair sticking to it, the pan down, and bloody; and on the leaves were spots and goutts of blood. About ten o'clock Mr. Nicholls, the surveyor, came round to see the men's work, and Herrington gave him the pistol and knife. About noon the two gentlemen from Probert's drove down the lane again in a gig with an iron-grey horse. The tall man drove; it was the only gig that passed that day. They both looked hard at the spot near the maple-tree where the knife and pistol had been found, but said nothing.

That morning, when Probert got up, his wife renewed her inquiries about the scenes of the night before. He only replied:

"Don't torment me; you make my life miserable." He seemed in low spirits all day, went moping round the garden and about the pond; then took his double-barrelled gun and went out shooting. Bullmer, the gardener, thought his master that day very "downy," as he was generally a very cheerful gentleman. Before he went out with his gun, he asked the gardener if he were not ready for his dinner, and told him it was two o'clock, as if anxious to get him away.

At half-past four that afternoon, Probert, with his gun and pointer, came over the hedge and across the field near Shenley Hill, to John Silver, landlord of the Black Lion public-house, who was turning a dunghheap. Silver saw he was low, and seemed to have something on his mind, and said to him:

"What the devil is the matter with you, Probert?"

Probert said:

"I have had a long walk, shooting, and I have had no sport. You had better come in and make some brandy-and-water, and let me have a crust of bread and cheese, and perhaps I shall be better." As Probert ate and drank, he fetched one or two heavy sighs.

That same morning, before Thurtell and Hunt left Gill's Hill, Mrs. Probert had observed the gig cushions drying at the kitchen fire, although there had been no rain the day before. She remarked upon this to her husband, but he ridiculed her for her nonsensical fears. Soon afterwards the cook, going into the stable, was surprised to see a wet ripped-up sack hanging on a nail.

On the Saturday, John Thurtell and Hunt dined with Thomas Thurtell and Mr. Noyes, Probert's brother-in-law, at the Coach and Horses, in Conduit-street. Hunt asked Thomas Thurtell, in a bragging way, to his surprise, if he wanted change for fifty pounds? He was in high spirits about his money, said he had been shooting game, and that Probert held the bag. On being questioned as to what they had been doing, Hunt said laughingly:

"We Turpin lads can do the trick. We have been committing bloody murder, to be sure."

John Thurtell was in very good spirits. His brother, observing his hands scratched and cut, asked the reason. To which John Thurtell replied:

"Oh, Hunt, Probert, and I were out netting partridges last night, and the bushes tore my hands."

After dinner, John Thurtell, pulling out a gold watch, his brother asked him where he got it? John replied that was no business of his.

Hunt said:

"What Turpin lads we are, John! Let's have a bottle of wine. I can't drink anything else now. My old woman (wife) was in a fine rage last night because I stayed out all night; but she was pleased when I pulled out the money, and ordered two fowls and some pickled pork."

On Sunday morning, Thomas Thurtell walked out on the Kilburn-road, on his way to Mr. Probert's, to see his little girls. Before he got to Kilburn, John Thurtell and Hunt came by in a gig, and took him up. About a mile from Edgeware they overtook Mr. Noyes. John Thurtell then got out and walked with him, and Hunt and Thomas Thurtell drove on to Probert's. As they drove past the garden fence, Hunt took out a new spade, which lay at the bottom of the gig half covered with a coat, and threw it over the garden hedge. On being asked why he did not take it round to the yard, Hunt replied: "Don't you think I know what I am after? Probert don't want his wife to know he is extravagant." They brought down in the gig with the spade a piece of beef and two bottles of rum.

On the Sunday, after walking in the garden and dining (Probert, it was noticed, had no appetite), cards were produced, and the two Thurtells, Hunt, and Noyes sat down to whist, while Probert went to see Mr. Nicholls, the road-surveyor, at Batler's Green, about letting his cottage. The game was, however, never played out; for John Thurtell said the cards ran cross, and threw up his hand.

At six o'clock on the Sunday evening, Mr. Howard, of 68, Hatton-garden, proprietor of the Gill's Hill Cottage, called there by appointment, and went with Probert to Mr. Nicholls.

Nicholls said at once to Probert:

"By-the-by, Probert, what the deuce was going on down your lane the other night? I suppose some of your people got groggy, and one of them got behind a hedge and fired off a gun to alarm the rest. I have done so myself in my younger days."

Probert replied he had not heard the report, and did not know anything about it. Some one then saying that Mr. Barker, who had just bought the place of Major Wood, intended to fill up the fish-pond (Probert seemed much interested at this), Mr. Howard said:

"They had better drag the pond, as there is a large quantity of fish in it, that I put in myself three years ago. Some of them weigh a pound each."

Smith, the farmer, who was present, then stated (Mr. Nicholls listening very attentively),

what he, his wife, and Elizabeth Osborne had heard in Gill's Hill-lane on the previous Friday evening. The conversation then dropped.

The next day, early, Mr. Nicholls, the road-surveyor, went to Watford, to the magistrates then sitting at the Essex Arms Inn, and told them the story of the pistol and knife, which he brought with him. They instantly sent the pistol to Bow-street, and requested an active officer to be sent down. Two magistrates at once proceeded to Mr. Nicholls's house, stopping in the lane by the way to see the spot where the pistol had been found. They discovered pools of blood under the leaves in a wheel-rut and a gap in the bank and hedge, where a body seemed to have been dragged through into the ploughed field adjoining. There was human hair sticking and tangled in the lower boughs and hedge-stakes, and on the field side of the hedge there seemed to have been much trampling. "There has been a murder here," said the magistrate at once, as he looked up with a pale face. Finding that Probert was to leave the next day, and that a caravan loaded with goods was even then in his yard, the magistrates and constables instantly went to Gill's Hill, took Probert and Thomas Thurtell into custody, and searched the house and premises. The others had gone to London.

Thurtell was apprehended at the Coach and Horses, in Conduit-street. His coat, waistcoat, shirt, and hat were stained with blood. At Hunt's lodgings there had been found a shooting-jacket, a backgammon-board, a double-barrelled Manton, and a carpet-bag containing several shirts marked W.; the stable-boy from Gill's Hill Cottage also deposed to having found a shirt of Mr. Weare's under a heap of dung in Probert's stable. Rexworthy, a billiard-table keeper in Spring-gardens, proved that on Thursday, the 22nd of October, John Thurtell came in and spoke to Weare at his house, and that when Thurtell left, Mr. Weare informed witness that he was going down to Hertfordshire on Friday for a few days' shooting with Thurtell, and that on Friday Mr. Weare called about three, and told him he was on his way to meet Thurtell in the Edgeware-road. Thurtell, being questioned by the officers, said he knew Mr. Weare, but had not seen him for eight days. He had not met him on Friday in the Edgeware-road. The pistol which was found in his pocket he had picked up on Sunday at Gill's Hill.

Mr. Noel, a solicitor generally employed in gambling-house cases, being present at the police-office, said to Thurtell: "You tell us you found this pistol near Probert's; what will you say when I tell you I can produce the fellow to it found within a few yards of the same spot?"

Thurtell replied: "I know nothing about that." But his countenance changed in a ghastly way.

Mr. Noel: I can tell you, Thurtell, that Mr. Weare is not to be found.

Thurtell: I am sorry for it, but I know nothing about him.

Mr. Noel then said to Hunt, in private:

"Mr. Hunt, for God's sake tell the magis-

trates whatever you know of this murder, and in all probability you will be admitted as evidence. It is clear that Mr. Weare has been murdered, we only want to find where the body is; if you know, for God's sake tell us."

Hunt several times denied all knowledge of the transaction, and resisted every importunity, in spite of the magistrates warning him to consider his perilous situation. He then was taken into another room with Mr. Noel and Ruthven and Upson, the Bow-street officers. He still remained firm. Upson then said:

"Hunt, you have a mother?"

"Yes, I have."

"And a wife also?"

"Yes."

"And you love them dearly?"

"Yes, very dearly."

"Then don't risk hanging, but tell where the body is, before Probert and the other peach, and it is too late." Hunt then consented to become a witness, and said he could point out the place where the body was. Mr. Noel struck his hand on the table, and, shaking Hunt's hand, said:

"That's all we want. Hunt, I am very glad you have saved your own life."

He was then taken to the magistrates, asked to sit down, and was given some brandy-and-water.

At nine o'clock four men went with Hunt in a hackney-coach to find the body. Hunt remembered the place by a bridge on the Elstree road. It was in a deep slough on the right-hand side going from Elstree to Radlet, and two miles from Gill's Hill. The body was found in the centre of the pond, where the water was four feet deep. It must have been swung in by two men. It was naked, the head and body in a sack, with flints under each armpit, and a handkerchief full of stones tied to the cord that fastened the sack. The jaw and left temple were driven in, as if with a pistol-muzzle. There was a shot-wound in the right cheek-bone, there were two deep cuts half through the jugular vein on the left side of the neck, behind the ear, and there was another wound on the right side. There was a red handkerchief tied round the neck of the corpse, as if intended to stanch the blood. Hunt would not look at the body. Probert said: "I never saw that corpse before. I declare to God I never did. You may rely upon it, I never saw that unhappy man before."

Hunt's confession to the magistrates was a conglomerate of lies and truth. He said that Thurtell told him that Weare and a man named Lemon had robbed him, with false cards, of three hundred pounds at blind-hookey. "Sooner or later," said Thurtell to Hunt, "I will be revenged." On the Friday he took a walk with Thurtell, and bought a pair of pocket-pistols. On his way down with Probert he had eight glasses of brandy-and-water, five at the Artichoke at Elstree. On arriving at Gill's Hill, Thurtell took them into the garden, and said: "I have settled that beggar that robbed me of three hundred pounds. I've blown his brains out, and he's behind a hedge in the lane."

Here the language of the confession becomes too absurdly unnatural to be true:—

“‘Nonsense,’ was,” Hunt said, “Probert’s reply, ‘nonsense. You have never been guilty of a thing of that kind, John Thurtell? If you have, and near my cottage, my character and my family are ruined for ever. But I cannot believe you have been guilty of so rash an act. Here, Hunt, take in that loin of pork, and desire the cook to get it dressed immediately.’” By-and-by they drank a glass of brandy, and ate two pork chops each. About four o’clock in the morning, Hunt continued, Thurtell went with the horse, and dragged the body into the horse-pond.

Thurtell, Probert, and Hunt, were arraigned at Hertford, December 4, before Mr. Justice Park and Mr. Justice Holroyd. Thurtell, who was the son of the Mayor of Norwich, and of respectable connexions, appeared at the bar dressed in a plum-coloured frock-coat, white neckcloth, a drab waistcoat with gilt buttons, and white corded breeches. He had a fierce Satanic face, long upper lip, a bony knotted forehead, and deeply buried eyes. His mouth was sensual, sullen, and dogged. His right eyebrow was nearly straight, while the left rose in a high pointed arch. His frame was athletic and powerful, and he had a peculiar stoop in his shoulders. Hunt, small, sallow, with unmeaning eyes, and hair foppishly disordered to express grief, was dressed in black, with a white cravat. Probert was a coarse unwieldy man, with a receding forehead, grizzly black hair, small head and legs, blubber lips, eyes like those of “a vicious horse,” and a deceitful, thievish expression.

Probert was admitted king’s evidence, told a much more natural story than Hunt, and revealed more details of the horrible and coldly premeditated crime. On the Thursday when he met Thurtell, the prisoner asked him for five pounds, and told him, if he did not get it, he should be three hundred pounds out of pocket. He was going down to Gill’s Hill, if a certain friend met him at the Paddington-gate at five, and said: “If I have an opportunity, I mean to do him, for he is a man that has robbed me of several hundreds. I have told Hunt where to stop. I shall want him about a mile and a half beyond Elstree. If you don’t go, give Hunt a pound.” On their way down, at about four miles from London, he and Hunt passed Thurtell. Hunt said: “It’s all right, Jack has got him; there they are; drive by, and take no notice.” At Elstree they stopped three-quarters of an hour, waiting for Thurtell, but somehow or other he had passed them without their knowing it, before reaching Edgware. Beyond Elstree, Hunt got out and waited for Thurtell. When Probert met Thurtell on the road, he asked for Hunt, but said:

“Oh, I don’t want him now. I’ve done the trick. I’ve killed the man I brought down, and rid the country of a villain.”

When they went to look for the body, Thurtell kicked about the leaves to find the pistol and knife, but without success. He (Probert) then

promised to look for them in the morning; the body was lying with the lead in a shawl. Thurtell searched the pockets, and took out a pocket-book with fifteen pounds in notes, a memorandum-book, and some silver; a purse of sovereigns and a watch he had before removed, he said, when he killed him. They then put the body head-foremost in a sack, and tied it round the knees. Then continued Probert,

Thurtell said: “When I first shot him, he jumped out of the gig and ran like the devil, singing out that he would pay back all he had won of me if I would only spare his life. I jumped out of the gig and ran after him. I got him down, and began to cut his throat, as I thought, close to the jugular vein; but I could not stop his singing out. I then jammed the pistol into his head, and gave it a turn round; then I knew I had done him. (Turning to Hunt) Joe, you ought to have been with me, for I thought at one time he would have got the better of me.” Thurtell said that, but for Hunt’s mistake, they should have killed Weare in the other lane, and then have gone to London and inquired of his friends why he had not kept his appointment. Thurtell and Hunt went out to bring the body, but found it too heavy, and left it. He (Probert) and Thurtell then went and brought the body on the horse, and put it in the pond with some stones in the sack. On Sunday, Hunt put on the clothes of deceased, and Thurtell walked to the pond, asked if the body had risen, and said it would lie there safe for months.

On his return from Mr. Nicholls’s, and telling what had occurred, Thurtell said: “Then I’m baked, but they could do nothing to him” (Probert). That night Thurtell and Hunt went to dig a grave, but the dogs were barking, and they were afraid some one was about. On Monday, while Hunt was talking to Mrs. Probert, he and Thurtell got the body up, and cut off the clothes. They then all three carried it to the garden gate, and put it into the gig. On the Friday night, Thurtell said, “I mean to have Barber Beaumont and Woods.” The former was a director of the County Fire Office, who had brought the charge of conspiracy against the Thurtells; Woods was Thurtell’s rival for the hand of Miss Noyes. A grave half dug was found in Probert’s garden; but the soil was flinty clay, and it is supposed that Thurtell and Hunt were afraid of the noise pickaxes would make.

Some of the incidents of the trial were appalling; others ludicrous. A constable carefully unrolled the pistol from a white paper. It was a small blue-barrelled pistol, smeared black with gunpowder, and dingy red with blood. A piece of tow was thrust into the muzzle to keep in its horrid contents—the murdered man’s brains. The short, curled hairs which had been literally dug from the victim’s head were firmly glued to the back of the pan with crusted blood. This fearful instrument of murder made all shudder except the murderers, who were equally callous during the production of Weare’s gun, his carpet bag, the shooting-jacket with the dog-whistle hanging

to it, the dirty leggings, the shoes, and the linen. The often-quoted reason for a man being respectable "because he kept a horse and gig" occurred during this trial; and when Probert's cook was asked whether the supper at Gill's Hill Cottage was "postponed," she answered, "No. It was pork."

Thurtell's speech in his own defence was written for him by his counsel, Mr. Phillips. He had learnt it by heart, and spoke it in a deep, measured, and unshaken tone, with studied and theatrical action. He denied that he was a callous, remorseless villain, depraved, profligate, and gratuitously cruel. He had fought and bled for his country (he had been in the Marines); but to raise the assassin's arm against an unsuspecting friend was horrid, monstrous, and incompatible with every feeling of his heart. He then enumerated a great many cases of persons who had suffered death innocently, from mistaken circumstantial evidence. He talked of his unstained and happy home, quoted St. Paul, entreated the jury not to cut him off in the very summer of his life (he was just thirty-one), wept, and concluded in these words, which he oratorically emphasised with appropriate and impassioned gesture: "I stand before you as before my God, overwhelmed with misfortunes, but unconscious of crime; and while you decide on my future destiny, I earnestly entreat you to remember my last solemn declaration—I am innocent, so help me God." "The studied, slow, and appalling tone," remarks a writer who was present, "in which Thurtell rang out these last words can never be imagined by those who were not auditors of it." He clung to every separate word with indescribable earnestness. The final exclamation, "God!" was thrown up with an almost gigantic energy. Yet, from first to last the whole was a performance that had been carefully premeditated.

Hunt, who was condemned to death with Thurtell, but was afterwards respited and transported for life, confessed that Thurtell had planned many murders, and had been hired by gamblers to get obnoxious men out of the way. He had tried to kill, with an air-gun, Mr. Osborne Springfield, a silk merchant, of Norwich, and also Mr. Barber Beaumont. He had decoyed Mr. Woods to his house in Manchester-buildings, and there waited for him with a large dumb-bell. Woods was frightened, and escaped. He had then planned to shoot him in bed, and pass it off as a suicide. He had also boasted that, when a lieutenant of marines, in the Bellona, he stabbed a wounded Polish officer at St. Sebastian, and took from his body one hundred and forty doubloons.

Hunt spent the night before execution with Thurtell. The prisoner shook him cordially by the hand at parting, and said, "God bless you. You have brought me to this situation, but I freely forgive you, and hope you will be reprieved and live to repent of your past errors. If you had had nerve like us, none of us would have been convicted of this crime; but I forgive you from the bottom of my heart."

One account, which describes this implacable ruffian as resigned and penitent, and as having read a sermon on the last judgment during the night before he was hung, does not harmonise with his well-known anxiety about the prize-fight between Spring and Langham, which took place on the previous day. "I know it to be a fact," reports one gentleman,* "that Thurtell said, about seven hours before his execution, 'It is perhaps wrong in my situation; but I own I should like to read Pierce Egan's account of the great fight yesterday.'"

He slept soundly till called; remarking, he never had had dreams "connected with this affair." He then breakfasted, prayed, it is said, received the sacrament, and parted with Hunt, hoping he would go abroad, live long, and die a happy man. He thanked the chaplain, and bade the under-sheriff and jailer good-bye.

The executioner and turnkey came and took off his hat and cravat, drew the white nightcap over his face, and put the cord round his neck. He merely said to the hangman, "Give me rope enough." To which the man replied, "Never fear; there is quite enough." The turnkey left the scaffold; the hangman mechanically pressed the prisoner's hand according to form, and left also. The next instant the platform fell with Thurtell. The body was then taken to the chapel, and in the evening put into a sack and driven in a gig (that day eleven weeks from the murder) to Bartholomew's Hospital, where Abernethy dissected it.

A cast of the murderer's powerful back, bowed as when the strangling bent it convulsively, we have seen in studios side by side with Madame Vestris's foot and the hand of Lucrezia Borgia.

Probert did not take his narrow escape much to heart, for only a year later he was hung at the Old Bailey for horse-stealing; the judges being only too glad to catch him tripping.

Years after the murder of Mr. Weare, the driver of the St. Alban's coach invariably slackened the speed of his horses when he crossed the bridge by Elstree, and point with his whip to the deep, lonely, roadside slough where the murdered man's body was found.

KÄTCHEN'S CAPRICES.

IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VI.

It would be impossible to describe Josef Kester's anger and consternation when Kätchen confessed to him the result of her interview with Ebner. He stormed and raved in one—the ungovernable and rare fits of fury which now and then broke the calm of his phlegmatic nature. And then, when his passion had spent itself, he tried to coax his wayward daughter. She had changed her mind once, and might change it again. But it was in vain.

"He spoke so harshly to me," said Kätchen, taking refuge in an air of being injured.

"Harshly? And no wonder!"

"But he said such shameful things; called me cruel, and heartless, and dishonourable. If

* In the London Magazine for February, 1824.

ever I could have made up my mind to have him, his words to-day would have cured me of such a notion."

This was not quite ingenuous on Kätchen's part, seeing that she had found herself obliged to refuse him long before he had spoken those harsh words. I am sorry to have to record it, but I am trying to describe her as she really was. Besides, in her blind perversity, she actually began to think herself ill used. Her father fell into the snare, and, dropping his attitude of attack, assumed the defensive, and commenced to excuse and justify Ebner.

"Why, it's natural enough, too. What do you think the man's made of? Angry! If a girl had treated me so, after drawing me on——"

"I did not draw him on, father. I never had any idea he wanted to marry me until he spoke. Why, had you, yourself?"

"I told you I had. Of course I had. It seems odd to me that you could be so blind. You're quick enough generally. But all that is nothing to the purpose. What I go upon is, that you told me you would marry him. Told me so, of your own will; and now you say 'no,' without rhyme or reason. But I understand well enough that that underhand fellow, Fitz Rosenheim, is at the bottom of it."

And then he subsided into a growling, half-audible tirade against Fritz; and Kätchen sat silent and sullen by the stove, giving little heed to her father's words, but brooding over her own troubles.

The next day, Sunday, neither father nor daughter went to Hallstadt to church. Ebner's boatmen rowed up to the landing-place at the Golden Lamb, but were thanked and dismissed. Their master was not in the boat, but he was above forbidding his servants to go for the Kesters as usual. It was a dreary day within and without the Golden Lamb. That grimy quadruped creaked and moaned in the autumn blast. A dry choking dust blew in clouds over the empty desolate high road, and the lake wore a livid hue, and broke with a dull splash on the shore. Dusky and dreary the day had dawned, dusky and dreary still it went down, with one lurid line of crimson in the western sky. Josef lit his pipe, and sat puffing cloud after cloud, until the glow of the burning tobacco in his pipe-bowl was the only thing visible in the dark kitchen, except such streaks of light as penetrated through the chinks of the stove. Kätchen had taken out a hymn-book, and had read in it mechanically while the daylight lasted, but now she sat staring at her father's glowing pipe, and letting her thoughts go whithersoever they listed. And a wild dance they had of it, flying off to the unlikely things and places, but under all, like a pedal bass in a piece of music, was the drowning sense of pain and unrest.

"Halloa! Are you all asleep here? No light? No welcome for a cold traveller?"

The cheery voice rang through the room, starting its inmates as if a bombshell had burst in their midst. Kätchen, whose nerves were unstrung, gave a sharp squeak like a frightened mouse. Old Josef started up, nearly oversetting his chair.

"Who's there?" said he. But he had known the voice well enough.

"Who but I, Herr Landlord? Fritz Rosenheim, at your service. Shall I light the lamp? And where can I find a lantern? for I must stable my beast. He's warm, and the breeze from the lake cuts like a scythe."

Without waiting for permission, Fritz lit the great old-fashioned oil-lamp that stood ready trimmed on the dresser, and proceeded to search for the lantern, like one who knew the house well.

"Stable your beast!" echoed Josef, recovering himself a little. "Ay, you may stable him, and that's all, for deuce a bit of provender you'll find to fill his belly with. There's mighty little entertainment at the Golden Lamb now, for either man or beast."

"Don't fret about that, Herr Kester. I've brought the piebald's supper along with me from Altenau. I thought how it might likely be. Here's the old horn lantern at last, and here's an end of candle ready to put into it." And honest Fritz bustled out to see to his horse.

"Are you going to stay here, then?" asked Kester, who had been staring open-mouthed at these proceedings. But Fritz was already unharnessing the piebald, and did not hear the question.

"Well, that's cool," said Josef, turning sullenly to his daughter. "He must mean to stay here. Then there are no travellers with him. Small thanks for his coming. If he had had any rich foreigners to convoy, it's the Black Eagle, and not the Golden Lamb, that would have been honoured by Herr Rosenheim's presence to-night."

"Of course it is!" answered Kätchen, sharply. None quicker than she to detect unreason and injustice in other people. "How could we entertain rich travellers? Haven't you just told him that you hadn't even a mouthful of hay for his one horse? How would it have been if he had brought the team?"

"Hold your tongue, saucebox. It's my belief you knew he was coming, and that it was all settled between you."

"You know you don't really believe that, father," she answered. But the accusation scarcely angered her. It was rather soothing to feel that, in this instance, she was blamed quite wrongfully. Kätchen did not mind being a victim up to a certain point, but she resented a merited rebuke with all the temper of a spoiled child. By-and-by Fritz's voice was heard shouting something; but the wind carried the words away.

"What is it?" asked Kester, standing shivering at the house door, and peering out into the night.

"Have you never a key to this outhouse where the cart stands?" bawled Fritz.

"A key? Thou dear Heaven! No; people don't want keys when they've nothing to lock up."

"Ay, but I have something to lock up, as it happens. See!" And he held the flickering lantern within the outhouse door, so as to show a light cart laden with luggage.

"How did you get the cart in?" asked Kester.

"Why, made the piebald back it in, before I unharnessed him. The door's wide enough. But I can't leave these things like this all night. They must be secured, somehow."

"Oh," sneered Josef, "they're so very precious, are they?"

"Yes; that they are," answered Fritz, simply.

"Whatever is in trust, is precious. And these things are in trust to me. If you can't lock the door, I must sleep here all night along with them, that's all."

Kester began to relent. His sulky fits seldom lasted long, they gave him too much trouble, and he was yielding to the fascination of his old liking for Fritz, and the young fellow's pleasant straightforward manner.

"Nay, nay, we'll manage better than that," he said. "You would be found dead of cold in the morning. What are the things? Are they too heavy to be moved?"

"Not a bit too heavy; only I had a thundering long job strapping and packing them all on this morning, and I didn't want to have it to do over again. However," he added, after a glance at old Josef's helpless face, "it's no use standing talking all night, is it? Hang the trouble! A little more, a little less, it won't kill me, I dare say. If you'll just be so good as hold the lantern, that's all I'll ask you to do."

And Fritz set to work energetically, undoing buckles and cords, and soon had the luggage unpacked.

"There! That was easier to undo than to do," said he, laughing, "and there ain't many things in this world a man can say that of." The packages consisted of two tolerably heavy trunks, and a small square box covered with leather. With the landlord's help, Fritz dragged them all across the yard, and piled them in one corner of the kitchen; and then, after some ablutions performed in an adjoining back chamber, he returned to sit down to whatever supper might be forthcoming. It was a better one than might have been expected from old Josef's cry of poverty; and over the meal Fritz Rosenheim related how and why he happened to be making that mountain journey so late in the year, with but one horse and no travellers. The foreign lady and gentleman with whom Laurier had travelled as courier, and whom Fritz had driven to Salzburg, had there met with some country-people of their own, and had given them a glowing account of the lake and mountain scenery on the route. So charmed were the ladies of the party with the description, that they resolved on going by the same way to Ischl.

"They had too much luggage for a carriage to take," said Fritz, "so they wanted part of it sent on by carrier. They were not staying at the Golden Cross in Salzburg, or I dare say I should have got the job of driving them to Ischl; but I know the Kutscher employed by their landlord, he's one Hans Koch, a good sort of fellow. He came to me one night, and said that if I liked to undertake it, the land-

lord of the Archduke Charles, where these foreigners were staying, would employ me to convey the heavy boxes to the hotel at Ischl. Of course I said 'Yes.' It don't do to let a chance of a job slip; especially as these are about the last travellers we shall see till next summer. The roads are getting very bad, as it is. I thought I never should pull up that last hill just before you come to Altenau, and my load's none so heavy, either. However, here I am, safe and sound, and the worst is over. You see I was a little anxious, because they specially warned me that that little leathern box had valuables in it, and of course——"

He stopped abruptly. Happening to look up, he had caught Liese's lacklustre eyes fixed unwinkingly on his face. She was drinking in his words in her dull slow way, but with an eager interest apparent in her heavy countenance.

"Good evening, Liese," said Fritz. "I didn't see you before."

"No; I've only just come in. Just this minute I was up at the saw-mill with Heinrich Amsel's mother. You were talking, and didn't hear me come in. I don't know what you were saying."

The last sentence was a piece of characteristically clumsy cunning. Rosenheim laughed.

"Well, then," said he, "you must have grown deaf since I saw you last, Liese. However, I was not talking any great secrets."

But he did not resume the subject he had been speaking of; and presently, when supper was over, and the two women had washed and put by the plates and dishes, Liese went off to bed, saying she was tired; and her broad, heavily shod feet were heard making the old wooden staircase creak beneath their tread.

"I think our Liese is a great fool," said old Josef, without taking his pipe from between his teeth.

Fritz looked up with an amused smile, and knocked the ash off the end of his cigar against the stove, as he answered, "Well, I don't just think she's the wisest woman in the world, myself."

"No; but she's a great fool in one special thing. She's always with those Amsels up at the saw-mill. They're a bad lot, mother and son. Heinrich is a wood-cutter by trade, but four days out of six he is not at work in the forest at all. He just hangs about here and there and everywhere, skulking like a fox; and Liese is with him every spare moment she has.

"But I thought she was betrothed to him," said Fritz.

"Didn't I say she was a great fool?" retorted the old man.

Then he bade Kätchen get to bed, and hung his smoked-out pipe by its green cord on a nail—an infallible signal of his being ready to go to rest. Kätchen took up her little copper lamp with its wick floating in oil, and said, "Good night," tripping up-stairs with a step which her love-troubles had not yet robbed of its spring.

"What a light footfall she has!" said Fritz, listening.

But Josef only grunted. He declined to say a word having his daughter for its subject. He never would speak of her to Fritz. In truth, he knew that if once led into that topic, the young man would openly avow his love, and ask him to sanction his wooing. It would doubtless have been the right course for old Kester to speak frankly to Fritz Rosenheim, or at least, if he would not do that, to have kept his daughter out of the young fellow's way. But the right course is seldom quite an easy one; and Josef Kester never voluntarily faced a difficulty, mental, moral, or physical. So he grunted, as aforesaid, and was in a mighty hurry to see the lights out, and get to his bed. Fritz shouldered the little leather-covered case to carry it to his sleeping-room.

"The big trunks," said he, "would not be easy to walk off with in the night, but I shall feel better pleased to have this small box by my bedside."

"Pooh!" said Kester, "what whim has bitten you? Did you ever hear of anything being walked off, as you call it, hereabouts?"

"No; but it's as well to be on the safe side. If the things were my own, I wouldn't be afraid to leave them out there in the shed. Good night."

"I suppose you'll be starting early, Fritz?"

"As early as I can. The daylight doesn't last long, now."

"Good night, lad."

And the two separated, each to his rest.

CHAPTER VII.

THE following morning was dull and cloudy, and there was a feeling in the air, and a look in the sky, that betokened a fall of snow before long. Kätchen dressed herself almost in the dark, and groped her way down-stairs to the kitchen. There was no fire in the stove, and no preparation for breakfast. "That lazy hulking Liese," said Kätchen to herself; "to think of her not being down yet! I'll rouse her to some tune, in a minute." But, even as she spoke, she perceived that the house door had been unbolted, and was partly open. "Why, she's gone out, then!" exclaimed the girl, in a startled tone. "Where can she be?" She was advancing towards the door, when it was opened from without, and Liese entered, followed by Fritz. "Where have you been at this hour?" asked Kätchen, in the imperious way habitual to her.

"Don't you see? To get wood. There wasn't enough to fill the stove."

Liese spoke sullenly, and threw down a great log with a bang on the stone floor. She was panting, and her shoes were covered with dust.

"You've been running yourself out of breath, I declare," said Kätchen, gazing at her in astonishment. "You don't usually do things in such a hurry. However, it's as well that you are in a humour to make haste this morning. Be quick with breakfast."

Fritz, meanwhile, had been busied in putting on a new lash to his whip, glancing furtively at Kätchen whenever he thought she did not observe him. "I am early, too, this morning," said he, coming forward when Liese had lit the fire, and was making a great clatter of preparation in the scullery. "I went to have a look at the piebald. He's all right."

"Oh!" said Kätchen, languidly. "Yes; he's all right."

Kätchen was absorbed in measuring out the coffee. Fritz came close to her, and she felt his arm enfold her waist. "Won't you give a pleasant word to a fellow?" said he, piteously.

"How dare you do that?" exclaimed Kätchen, turning to transfix him with a haughty stare which would have done credit to a duchess.

Fritz dropped his arm as if Kätchen's little waist had been red hot. "Dare!" said he, and the blood rushed up into his brown face. "I did not mean to offend you, Mam'sell Katarina, but it seems that we can't get on together at all. When I am away from you, I long for nothing so much as the moment when I shall see you again; and yet when we do meet, somehow it's all wretched. It does seem hard."

Now, Kätchen had not meant to be taken quite au pied de la lettre when she asked Fritz how he dared to put his arm round her. It was simply a piece of coquetry. She had been feeling quite lofty with a sense of the sacrifice she had made of Herr Ebner on Fritz's behalf. She had persuaded herself that she had given up wealth and station all for his sake, and had meant to dazzle him, by-and-by, with a glimpse of her magnanimous behaviour. And now, here he was beginning by being aggrieved and hardly treated. Fritz was always so provokingly in earnest, and though he could not be aware that Kätchen had refused Ebner's offer, she was as perversely angry with him as though he had already known all about it.

"Indeed," said she, coldly. "Then if it's all wretched, as you say, I think it a pity that we do meet at all."

"Oh, don't say that, Kätchen! Why should it be all wretched? It need not be, if you would only——"

"Oh, thank you. Of course it's my fault. I am sorry that I happen to be so disagreeable in your eyes, but really I don't know how to help that."

"Disagreeable in my eyes! But you know that's just nonsense, Kätchen. I've told you how much I love you often enough to make you believe me, if telling would do it; but I think—I do think it shouldn't be quite all on one side. If you care for me, I have a right to say that much, Katarina."

"All on one side! Thou dear Heaven! Ungrateful, insensible creature! What do you endure for my sake in comparison with the sacrifices I make on your account? The greater fool I!"

"You make sacrifices for me, Kätchen? I know I'm not your equal in many things, but

I know, too, that a real honest heart is worth something to any woman who knows how to prize it."

"And do you think yours is the only heart in the world? I can tell you, Mr. Modesty, that I could have had a heart perhaps as honest as yours, if I hadn't been a fool and thought more of you than you merit."

"What do you mean, Katarina? You *must* tell me now." Fritz's voice trembled, and his sunburnt cheek grew pale with the strong effort to preserve his self-command. "Are you thinking of that man at the Black Eagle? Do you believe that he would marry you?"

"Believe it! I know it. He implored me to be his wife. I might have been rich—a lady—and father would have been provided for; but I said no."

"And why did you say no?" asked Rosenheim, with his teeth set and his chest heaving.

"Why did I say no?" Kätchen was furious. Was this the reception due to the announcement of her noble conduct? She did not reflect how she had been goading and irritating her lover into anger.

"I said no because I was absurd enough to think it would make you happy; but I see now how foolish I have been."

There was a minute's pause. The two young people stood opposite each other, she flushed and excited, he pale, stern, deeply hurt. At length he spoke:

"Well, Kätchen, I am truly sorry that I have been the obstacle in your path. I'm too sincere in my feelings towards you to say that I wish you to marry another man. I ought to, perhaps, but I fairly cannot. Only I'm grieved to the heart that you should ever have been hampered with a poor clumsy fellow like me, that has neither money nor land to offer you. And since—since you seem to repent what you have done, I'll leave you at liberty, now and for ever. You shall not have Fritz Rosenheim to blot out the sunshine from you." Kätchen was now standing at the window which looked on the lake, and had her head turned away from her lover. "Of course if you cared for me—ever so little," pursued Fritz, "that would alter the case; but you don't; I can see that." A pause. "You don't care for me," repeated the poor young fellow, with so wistful a look, that, if Kätchen could have seen it, her obstinate perversity must surely have melted away. But she did not see it. She kept her head turned from him towards the lake, and vouchsafed no answer. And in another minute it was too late to give any, for old Kester came hurrying down, and the breakfast was hastily set on the table.

The meal was taken almost in silence. Fritz was usually full of talk and mirth, but his light-heartedness had been effectually subdued; and Kester was dull and preoccupied. At last Fritz rose up with a great sigh, which came out unawares, and made him colour the moment afterwards.

"I must see to putting the luggage up,"

said he. "Will you mind giving a lift with the boxes, Liese?"

Liese's help was very different from old Kester's. She swung up one end of the great trunks as easily as Fritz himself carried the other, and the boxes were soon placed in the cart. Then came the strapping and cording. Fritz had had plenty of experience in such matters, but it nevertheless took some time to accomplish; for he was careful and anxious. The large trunks were put in first, and the small square box strongly secured on the top of them. Fritz went into the house to pay his score, and looked eagerly round the kitchen to see if Kätchen would not vouchsafe one word, even one look, to soften his regret. No, she was not to be seen. There was no one but old Kester, in one of his most depressed moods. When Fritz brought out the piebald from the stable to harness him, he found Liese still busy about the cart, giving some finishing touches to the cords and straps.

"Let be—let be, Liese," said he. "It's all right and safe enough. I'll warrant any knot of my tying to hold fast. And he tossed her a piece of money as he mounted into his seat. "Good-bye, Herr Kester," he cried out, and the old man came to the door.

"Oh, you'll be passing back again soon, Fritz Rosenheim."

"Well, no; I think not. It's likely I shall go from Ischl by the Traun-see to Grunnden, and then—who knows?—perhaps even to Vienna. You won't see me again very soon, I'm thinking."

"Well, take care of yourself. I hope we shan't have snow before nightfall. You have a heavy load."

"Ay," said Fritz, as he drove out of the little yard and urged his horse along briskly; "ay, a heavy load, as you say. Not that the boxes are so much of a load, but I can understand now what folks mean when they talk of being heavy-hearted. My heart feels such a weight in my breast that I almost wonder the piebald can drag it behind him."

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE than a week passed away, uncomfortably enough, at the Golden Lamb. Kester's prediction about the snow had been verified. It had begun to fall on the evening of the day on which Fritz went away. But inside the house things looked yet more chill and dreary. Josef had accused his daughter of indulging in more "moonshine" with Rosenheim. He suspected that that hour they had been together in the early morning had been spent in love-making. But, to his amazement, Kätchen informed him that she and Fritz were thenceforth to be as strangers; that it was clear he did not really love her; that she cared nothing for him; and that so it was best that they each go their separate ways, and forget any absurd love-passages which might have taken place between them. Kätchen spoke

with a flippant laugh and an assumption of her old spoiled-child manner; but the effort was visibly a hard one. Josef was dumbfounded. All along, since the final rejection of Ebner, he had had a secret conviction that he should have at last to accept Fritz for a son-in-law; and, though he grumbled, his easy-going nature had begun to accustom itself to the idea. He liked Fritz. He had done his best for Kätchen. If she would be headstrong, was he to make himself miserable about it? But now the news he heard fairly bewildered him.

"Good Heaven above us!" said he, "who ever heard the like? Why, I believed in my soul that you refused Ebner mainly on that young fellow's account."

"So I did," said Kätchen, quickly.

"You did? You own that you did; and after giving up the best prospect ever girl had, on account of this lover, you go and throw *him* over as well! It's madness. Just stark staring madness, that's all I can say. God help you when I'm gone, my lass; for, as true as I'm a living man, I believe you'll never have such another chance."

And that was all the comfort Kätchen got from her father. But her own conscience said yet harder things to her. And these she had to listen to day by day, at all hours. In the dull grey mornings, amidst her household work, and mixed up with the whirr of the great spinning-wheel, or the click of the knitting-needles, she had to listen to these harsh truths, and to confess her faults with bitter self-upbraiding. For now that Fritz seemed gone for ever, she knew that she loved him, and that he had loved her a thousand times better than she deserved. Perhaps, poor, perverse, spoiled child that she was, there needed some such grief and some such parting to open her eyes to the truth. In spite of her vanity, and frivolity, and coquetry, she had a heart, as I have said before, and she suffered very really. She had not the relief of speaking of her sorrow. A remnant of wilful pride prevented her from confiding in her father; for she believed that Fritz must be wearied out with her caprices, and that his love would not be able to survive her unreasonable cruelty.

"Of course he will forget me in time," she said to herself, "and he will fall in love with some other girl, who will know how to value him. But I know how to value him now, and I love him too; only it is too late. Too late."

It must not be supposed that Ebner had resigned all hope of winning Kätchen from the result of that one interview by the lake. His anger had gone, but his love remained. He came down to the Golden Lamb two days after Fritz's departure, and found Kätchen alone. She was pale and weary, tired in body after a hard day's work, and she sat by the stove in the winter twilight, whilst great hot tears kept falling, every now and then, on the coarse worsted stocking she was knitting. Ebner could not see her distinctly in the dim light,

but the tone of her voice, as she greeted him, betrayed that she was not herself.

"Are you not well, Mam'sell Katarina?" asked Ebner, anxiously.

"Oh yes; quite well, only a little tired."

And then, by degrees, Caspar Ebner began to renew his suit, accusing himself of having been harsh and hasty, and pleading for forgiveness. Kätchen answered straightforwardly enough now. She was made sympathetic to another's sorrow by the pain in her own heart.

"O Herr Ebner, you were only too good to me. I am not worthy of it. But I want you to believe that I didn't mean to deceive you."

"I am sure of it, Kätchen. And now can't you think better of it, and say that one kind word that shall make me so happy?"

But this Kätchen could not do; and the refusal was more difficult to her now than it had been before. Ebner pleaded as best he could; asking not for love such as he offered, only for kindness and confidence. He would wait for the rest. Then Kätchen took a resolution.

"Herr Ebner," she said, firmly, though her pale face grew scarlet from brow to chin, "I have no love to give you. I love some one else with all my heart."

"Kätchen," said he, after a moment's silence, "when you spoke to me before, you told me you were beloved, but you did not say you loved. Am I to believe you false-tongued after all?"

"I didn't know it myself, then," answered the girl, simply. Many more words passed between them, but Ebner seemed to lose the hope he had held fast by from the first. Kätchen's feeling was too real and strong to be simulated. He perceived that she was in earnest now, whatever might have been her former giddiness. Strange to say, it never recurred to him to guess who the favoured lover might be. There was not a servant about the Black Eagle but could have given him the information, but Caspar Ebner was not a man to talk to his servants on such a matter. So he went out from Kätchen's presence that evening, unwillingly convinced that his suit was hopeless, but ignorant of the name of his rival. After all, what did it matter? If Kätchen were determined not to love *him*, what did anything matter? Before the end of the week, however, came news which caused a great deal of excitement in Gossau, and even Caspar Ebner found that his misplaced attachment had by no means deprived daily life of its interest and savour. There came a message to Josef Kester, from Fritz Rosenheim, importing that a great misfortune had befallen the latter. The leather-covered box had been lost or stolen, and search and inquiry were to be made for it all along the road. It was an unusual, almost unprecedented circumstance, and made a great stir in the village. Every one knew, and most people liked, Fritz Rosenheim, and the tale flew like wildfire. The peasant—a rough carter—who had brought the message to Kester, was lionised and cross-examined all day long. The demand

for beer at the Golden Lamb was greater than it had been for years past, and in spite of his sympathy with Fritz's trouble, old Kester heartily enjoyed the bustle and importance of his position.

"How was it, then, Hans?" asked a neighbour, making the twentieth time the question had been put that morning.

"Nobody knows. If they did, no need of all this bother," was Hans's sententious answer.

"But I mean, how does he *think* it happened? There are no thieves hereabouts, you know, and anything lost would be sure to be given back to the owner."

"Oh, *would* it?" said Hans. "Then it's all right."

In this laborious way—but surely if vanity feels no pain, curiosity heeds no trouble—bit by bit, the story was dragged from Hans; and this was his account. Fritz Rosenheim had reached Ischl after nightfall, on the evening of the day on which he left Gossau. The snow had been falling for some hours, and man and horse were stiff and cold and weary. Fritz had driven into the court-yard of the inn, and dismounted, leaving his horse and cart to the care of a friendly ostler. But it was not long before—being revived by warmth and meat and drink, he had visited the stable to look first at his beast, and then gone to the great room next the porter's lodge on the ground floor, where the luggage was deposited. Picture his consternation at finding only two packages! The leather-covered box was gone. All inquiries and examination elicited the same statement from the servants. There had been but the two black trunks on the cart when Fritz arrived. The testimony of the waiters, the porter, and the ostler, was positive on this point.

"Indeed," said the man, who had helped Fritz down, and afterwards unharnessed the piballd, "I did notice that the top cord was very loose, and seemed a deal too long, hanging down behind; but the boxes were secured by straps, so I thought it was all right enough."

Poor Rosenheim was like one distracted. The travellers to whom the luggage belonged had not yet arrived at Ischl, but they were expected daily, and how should he face them? How face the landlord of the Archduke Charles at Salzburg, who had trusted him? The people of the inn at Ischl tried to cheer him. The box had most likely dropped on the road, and been unheard falling on the soft snow. In that case it would be restored as soon as possible. The people were mostly honest enough in those parts. Every inquiry should be made. But, up to the time of Hans's arrival at Gossau, no tidings had been heard of the missing box. Caspar Ebner had come down to the Golden Lamb when the rumour reached him, and stood listening to

Hans with the rest. There was a chorus of comments, suggestions, and exclamations. All at once Liese muttered,

"Perhaps Fritz himself knows more about the box than any one else. He was mighty careful of it when he was here."

"That's a lie, whoever said it," exclaimed Ebner, turning quickly round. "Fritz Rosenheim, whom I have known from a child, is as honest in word and deed as the honestest man in Gossau. I wonder anybody should have the heart to cast a stone at him in his trouble."

If he had but known how near Kätchen came to loving him at that moment! Liese scowled, and launched what she thought to be a poisoned arrow in reply:

"Oh, I know one mustn't say a word against him here," said she. "I forgot he was Kätchen's sweetheart."

That was the first revelation Ebner had as to who was his rival. But he answered staunchly and almost instantly,

"Not a word shall be said against him here or anywhere else, whilst I am by to defend him. I have known and employed Fritz Rosenheim for years, and, I repeat, he is incapable of dishonesty in word or deed."

Kätchen walked up to him before them all, with streaming eyes, took his hand and kissed it. It is a common mark of respect in that country from inferiors to superiors. "You're a good man," said she, with a great sob. This little scene made a hush in the crowded kitchen. All eyes were fixed on Kätchen, but she did not seem to heed them. She was not thinking of herself at all. Presently the neighbours began to disperse. Not that they had by any means satiated their curiosity, but it seemed that Hans was becoming more and more hopelessly laconic under the influence of the vast potations of beer to which they had treated him with the idea of making him talk. And, besides, they had now fresh food for gossip, which could not be discussed there. It was a memorable day for the scandal-mongers of Gossau.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I. LOOKING OUT ON THE TAUNUS.

It was a beautiful day in the early autumn, and though "all the world" had not yet mustered at Hombourg von der Höhe, though the hotel of "Quarter Sessions" had not yet a tithe of the illustrious names for contribution to the visitors' list which it was destined to have, the scene presented by the little white tower in its setting of green—a green nearer to emerald than any between itself and the shores of Dublin Bay—was gay, striking, pleasant, and varied. Groups of fluttering dresses, whose bearers were further adorned with perfect boots and exquisite hats, and could, for the most part, boast of the attractions of youth and prettiness, were abroad in the alleys, under the shade of the slim, graceful trees. The sounds of distant music from the bands dispersed about for the delectation of the visitors, and those of glad, careless voices in such leisure talk as suited the scene and the season, mingled themselves, and came floating in upon the warm air at the open windows to regale the ears of such as had not gone out to share in the busy idleness of the majority of the sojourners at the Baths.

At one of these open windows, which looked out upon a pretty prim little garden, bordered on the confines of the broad shady alley down to which it stretched by some trees nobler and more rich in foliage than their fellows, the strollers in the alley might have observed three gentlemen in earnest and protracted conversation. One was seated in a large arm-chair, which occupied one of the sides of the bay-window; a second leaned against the open frame of the central compartment; and the third, a shorter and slighter man than either of his companions, stood upright between them, and as he spoke turned his head and his keen eyes from one to the other with an animated and characteristic gesture. The gentleman seated in the arm-chair was a tall, frostily grey, scrupulously dressed, laboriously polite elderly man, who constantly twirled a heavy gold eye-glass in very white and bony hands. He seemed agitated—indeed, so much so, that some of his acquaintances in

the far-off English district which had the honour of being his home would have found some difficulty in recognising him. He was hardly pompous as he sat this fine morning looking out on the Taunus, and taking note of neither mountain, nor valley, nor forest; his manner was actually that of a man seeking and welcoming sympathy; it really seemed possible that an observer of the scene might have ventured on taking the liberty of feeling sorry for Mr. Carruthers of Poynings.

The smaller, slighter man, who formed the centre figure of the group, was of somewhat remarkable aspect. Very wiry and alert of frame, well knit and upright, his figure had a certain youthfulness about it which was contradicted by his face—that of a man who had passed the confines of middle age. His face was handsome, thoughtful, and bore the impress of heavy trouble, and in the dark eyes, and generally in the straight and refined features, it presented a strong resemblance to that of Mrs. Carruthers.

Not unnaturally, for the gentleman in question was Mark Felton, Mrs. Carruthers's brother.

The third component of the group, a young man, who leant against the frame of the open window and looked out, his face turned away from the speaker and the "other listener," his tall, loosely-built figure distinctly visible from the road, was George Dallas.

"Under these circumstances, and seeing that waiting was inevitable, and that I could do nothing in that matter actively," Mark Felton was saying, "I determined to come on here at once. All I heard at Poynings—"

"I hope you were properly entertained there?" said Mr. Carruthers, in the old "of Poynings" manner.

"Perfectly, my dear sir—perfectly. As I was saying, all I heard at Poynings, and what George told me"—he cast a quick glance at his nephew here, in which there was already hearty liking—"made me more than ever anxious to see Laura. Besides, I was exceedingly anxious to make your acquaintance without any further delay."

"A wish which I reciprocated, I assure you, Mr. Felton."

"In bringing George with me, I acted on my own judgment, and on a conviction that you would regard the matter as I do. I believed you would consider him entitled to see his mother, and would be glad to learn from me

that his prospects in life are as much improved as his inclination and determination to do them honour are genuine and strong."

"You are quite right, Mr. Felton," said the honourable old gentleman, who had begun to feel himself somehow beaten by fate, and was, secretly, immensely relieved that his step-son had made his appearance without having been sent for, and in such unexceptionable company. "It is necessary now that Mr. Dallas—that—that George" (he got out the word with an immense effort, and it meant everything) "should be near his mother. I am glad to know he has found a friend in you."

"And I am still more glad to believe," said Mr. Felton, not precisely interrupting Mr. Carruthers, but taking advantage of a slight pause to speak—"I am glad to know that he found me just when he was learning to do without any one."

It is possible that a good deal of Mr. Carruthers's trouble—and he had suffered severely since he had left England—had had its origin in a conviction, which had stolen upon him at first, and latterly had threatened to overwhelm him, that he had not been faultless in his conduct towards his wife and his treatment of her son. He had found out very shortly after they had left Poynings—for in the deadening of her faculties, forgetfulness of her fear of him had come—how mistaken he had been in supposing that he had suppressed her love for George, her constant remembrance of him, or had supplied by all he had given her for the boon he had withheld. In her placid way, when she would sit for hours talking softly to herself, his wife had administered some very telling lessons to Mr. Carruthers. It was with an uneasy surprise that he came to feel how very dear she was to him, how indispensable to his life, how strangely the things which had held the first place in his estimation, behind which he had ranked her, and she had been content humbly to follow, fell away into complete insignificance. He actually forgot Poynings at times, and was not worried by fears that the lawn was not properly mown and smoothly rolled, or by visions of fallen leaves lying about in the sacred places. His "business papers" were duly forwarded to him, but they did not interest him much; his mind dwelt almost entirely on his wife's state, and he was rapidly passing, as might be expected from a man whose moral perceptions had been suddenly awakened and enlarged, from the recognition of his true share of blame in the calamity which had befallen them, to an exaggeration of that share, which rendered him almost oblivious of the provocation he had received. Had George Dallas suddenly appeared before his step-father at Poynings, he might not have been well received; the influence of old habits and associations, in the sense of the promulgation of the old edict of banishment, might have successfully overpowered the new influences striving with pride and obstinacy in the by no means bad heart of Mr. Carruthers. But the occasion had been most auspicious. Here, in a foreign place, where Mr. Carruthers

was positively oppressed with a sense of strangeness, and where no one was present to know anything about the concession he was making, he had but trifling difficulties to overcome, and the meeting between the three gentlemen had been kindly, unreserved, and cordial.

The report of his wife's condition, which Mr. Carruthers had made to her son and brother, was not very reassuring, and was doubly distressing to George, in consequence of the stress which his step-father laid upon the good effect to be anticipated by his restoration to her. Had Mr. Carruthers been in a less charitable frame of mind, he might have taken the silence and sadness with which George received his assurances on this point for sullenness; but he did not, he was actually learning to make allowance for the temperaments and the feelings of other people.

Mr. Felton and his nephew had arrived at Hombourg on the preceding evening, and Mr. Felton had communicated by letter with Mr. Carruthers, who had named an early hour on the following day for receiving his unknown brother-in-law and his little-known step-son. Their interview had lasted some time, when Mr. Carruthers expressed his belief that good might result to his mother from seeing George.

The young man turned his face from the speaker, and made no answer.

"It will be necessary, of course, to have her physician's advice and permission in the first instance," said Mr. Felton, "before either George or I can see her. I suppose she is in good hands here?"

"In the best possible," replied Mr. Carruthers. "Dr. Merle is famous in the treatment of these strange mental maladies; indeed, it was in order to consult him that I changed my plan, and came here instead of going to the south of France, as I had intended."

"So Miss Carruthers told me," said Mr. Felton; which simple observation caused George Dallas to start perceptibly, and to turn abnormally red in the face.

"Indeed," said Mr. Carruthers. "I did not know you had seen my niece."

"No?" said Mr. Felton. "I suppose she left it to me to tell you of her prompt politeness to an intruder. When I had seen your housekeeper, and learned all she could tell me, especially that my sister had not received my letters, and knew nothing of my return to England, I quickly made up my mind to join you abroad. Miss Carruthers being in correspondence with you, and therefore able to give me all the information I wanted, was clearly the person I ought to see, so I started for the Sycamores, saw her—and a very beautiful and charming girl she is—heard from her all she had to tell me, and then went up to town to make acquaintance with my nephew."

Mr. Carruthers felt and looked rather conscious and uneasy while Mr. Felton was making this explanation. Clare had a considerable involuntary share in the self-reproach and regret he was experiencing. His wife had been, to a certain extent, sacrificed to her, and the remem-

brance disconcerted him. As for George, where was all his resentment against his step-father now? Where was all his exultation that he and destiny united had outwitted the proud and pompous old tyrant, as he had called him in his thoughts, and brought about a meeting, which his inner consciousness told him had had no trifling result for either, between him and the jealously guarded heiress? It augged well for George's future that he felt deeply sorry at the moment the girl's name was mentioned that his step-father had sustained this unintentional and unknown wrong at his hands. As things were going now, he and Clare might have met, in all probability, openly and blamelessly; and George felt, in his altered mood, that he would willingly part with the romance and mystery which now attended their acquaintance, to escape from the sense that he had been uncandid, that he had misled the girl by her ardent fancy, and under the temptation of resentment against his step-father. It was too late now, as George felt bitterly, for such regret; the future would enable him only so far to retrieve the past, as the most scrupulous abstinence from availing himself of the opportunity whose occurrence he now regretted, might retrieve it. Clare would probably know him, in his true character, soon, for he saw at once that Mr. Carruthers, having taken the generous resolution, had taken it thoroughly—and she would despise him for the deceit he had practised towards her, forgetting, in his hot-headed resentment against her uncle, and infatuation with herself, that such knowledge must come, and such contempt come with it. Heavily the punishment of the past was falling upon George Dallas, even in this hour of reconciliation, or rehabilitation, of absolute good fortune. His uncle had been impressed in his favour beyond his expectations; he had learned not to expect much from young men and only sons; and George had been perfectly candid with him, so that the elder man had gained an insight into his character, full of encouragement and hope. Mr. Felton had told him that he should make his future safe, so far as pecuniary independence could secure it; and though George had suffered severely from want of money, and knew well from how much evil he might have been preserved by its possession, he did not over-estimate the extent of that security; so that the tide of fortune had indeed turned for the prodigal son. But the husks were still between his teeth, and bitter in his mouth. There were two women in the world infinitely dear to him, and he had injured them both: the one, probably, mortally; the other, basely, as he now knew and felt—how severely, time alone could tell. The fortune with which his uncle would endow him could not purchase the reversal of these facts; the respectability with which he could cover the past could not efface that stain.

"As a man soweth, so shall he reap;" and harvest-time was heavy for George.

Thus thinking, George's attention had wandered from the conversation between the others, and was only recalled by Mr. Felton's addressing him directly.

"Your mother was always in possession of your address, George, was she not?"

"Certainly," replied George, "until lately—until her illness. I left London for Amsterdam just before it commenced, and did not hear from, or write to her, beyond a few lines, until I got your letter, sir," turning to Mr. Carruthers.

"That decides it, you see," continued Mr. Felton, in pursuance of the remarks which George had not heard. "My sister evidently never received any letter or message from Arthur, or, as you suggest, she would have put George in communication with him. I can only conclude that he left England again to return to some of his continental haunts. They were not too reputable," said Mr. Felton, bitterly; "and has not yet returned. I must only wait, and for every reason I had better wait here."

"Certainly," said Mr. Carruthers. "I am very sorry you should have anything to distress you, in addition to my wife's illness, in coming to England, especially in connexion with your son."

A footman, one of the "suite" who had attended Mr. and Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings on their departure from that deserted locality, now entered, and announced that Dr. Merle had arrived. As it had been previously arranged that Mr. Carruthers should consult that high authority in their absence, the uncle and nephew took their hats, and went out into the prim little garden, whence they reached the shady road. There they paced up and down, passing and passed by the groups of loungers, some of whom were attracted by the preoccupied and serious air with which the two gentlemen conversed.

"If I did not know that he had sufficient money to last for a longer time than I have been without news of him, and also that he has a happy knack of making money wherever he may be, in some way or other, I should at once communicate with the police," Mr. Felton was saying.

"Yes," said George, "but the worst of it is, we don't know what police to communicate with, whether English or foreign. If he had not taken his money out of the Liverpool bank, we might suppose him to be in England, but that looks conclusive, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does," said Mr. Felton; "the only clue I have is the fact that he did draw the money, and wrote me the line I told you of—" he opened his pocket-book mechanically as he spoke, glanced at a letter placed within the leaves, replaced the book in his breast-pocket, and went on—"promising further particulars. It is almost incredible that he should be in England, and not have written again. My letters to him, addressed to the Liverpool bank, have not been sent for. He got one when he drew the money."

"Yes, I know," said George. They had talked the matter over many times, and never drew nearer a conclusion. It was evident to George, on the present occasion, that the character of his uncle's apprehensions was undergoing a change. "At first, he had treated his son's silence as only one additional example of the utter callousness and indifference to

which the father was only too well accustomed. George, to whom his cousin was an utter stranger, had accepted his uncle's view of the matter, at first, unquestioned, but he had become unsatisfied and uncertain about it of late, and was anxious, without alarming Mr. Felton, to lead him to take active steps for obtaining information of the whereabouts of his son.

"I feel satisfied he left England again, and knows nothing of my movements. He will write out to New York, however, and if he has only done so now, there will be some delay before he knows I am in Europe."

"Don't you think," asked George, hesitatingly, "he would send to Liverpool for the letters, if he were in any uncertainty, before writing to New York? I confess I don't like his leaving them unclaimed. None of the reasons which may explain his silence reach to an explanation of that. I don't think you ought to let much more time go over. If you had a likeness of him——" He hesitated very much here, and looked aside at his uncle, who turned sharply towards him, and said:

"Well! What! If I had a likeness——"

"You might have had it copied, and the photographs distributed to the police, so that if anything should be wrong——"

"Wrong? In what sense, George? Do you begin to fear that anything has happened to him? You never said so at first."

"Because I did not think so, uncle, and I am not seriously uneasy now—not at all; but I think a reasonable time has elapsed, and we ought now to make active inquiry. When he turns up, and finds out what trouble and anxiety he has given, he will be more considerate in future."

"Ah," said Mr. Felton, with a sigh, "I don't think Arthur is open to any conviction of that kind. What do you think it best to do, now?"

"Well, uncle, you see you have been three weeks in Europe, and those three weeks make a considerable addition to the time since you heard from him. If you write by the next mail to New York for a copy of his photograph——You are sure you have not one with you?"

"Quite sure. Since I found I had not one in my desk, I have searched everywhere among my luggage, but I have not one."

"Well, then, if you write by this mail for a copy, and it is sent by return mail, if he has not turned up in the mean time, and things go on well here, I think you had better put the matter into the hands of the police. It is true you do not know whether Arthur is in England now, or abroad; but the last place in which you know him to have been is London, and from that information they must work."

"True," said Mr. Felton; and then continued, in a slow, reluctant tone, "I shrink from it, I confess. A matter which is placed in the hands of the police always implies something disgraceful; and though I don't expect to find that Arthur has disposed of his time and his money very creditably, I don't like to make so sure of it as I feel convinced a close investigation will make me."

Mr. Felton spoke with some agitation, and George thrilled with a mingled feeling of pity

and dread, he did not know of what. But he said, cheerily:

"Well, sir, let us hope there will be no occasion for making any such investigation. You can't have an answer for nearly three weeks, and a great deal may happen in that time. Arthur may be here long before then, to answer for himself, and laugh at us for our anxiety about such a citizen of the world, old and new."

"I don't like it," George thought, as he walked on, in silence, by the side of his uncle—"I don't like it. And it's very plain I am not the only black sheep in the family flock, nor, I suspect, the blackest. I will see that he writes to New York, and I will tell Routh all about this when he comes, and hear what he says. My uncle will not mind my telling him now, I dare say."

"When do you expect your friends, George?" asked Mr. Felton, striking the chord of George's thought, after the fashion which every one knows, and nobody can explain.

"To-morrow, or the day after, sir," replied George. "Routh wrote from Paris yesterday."

"I am sorry for Mrs. Routh," said Mr. Felton; "she's too secretive, and too cautious, too silent, and too cunning, for my fancy; but she is an interesting woman, and a wonderfully good wife, I am sure, though of the stony order."

"That is come to her lately," said George, in an eager tone, "since her health has failed so much. You cannot imagine what a different creature she was only a little while ago. She was as bright as the sunshine, and as gay as a lark. She is, indeed, a wonderful wife—the most devoted I ever knew; and her usefulness in everything, in all a woman's ordinary ways, and in many quite extraordinary—in all Routh's business matters, is marvellous. Even her delicate health, though she has lost her good looks very much, and her spirits quite, has not made any alteration in that. I cannot conceive what Routh would do without her."

"H'm! I wonder if he is quite so uncertain," said Mr. Felton, dryly, and to George's surprise. "I don't like your friend, and I don't trust him."

"What do you mean?" asked George. "Don't trust him? Do you mean that you don't trust his feelings or his conduct to Harriet?"

"Precisely so, my dear boy. Mrs. Routh is a devoted wife, but I am very much mistaken—and remember, I have been playing looker-on for a fortnight or so, and interested in my part, too, considering what you told me about yourself and these people—if she is not a very unhappy one. I do not pretend to explain my convictions, but I am quite clear about them. She loves Routh, that's plain enough, but she is miserable with him."

"Do you really think so? She is dreadfully changed, I know, but I thought it might be only in consequence of her ill health. Miserable with him! At all events, he is not unkind to her. I know he is very anxious about her health, for he has left London, at much inconvenience and great risk of loss, to bring her here for the waters."

"And for a turn at the gaming-tables for himself, I fancy. Routh has to me the air of a

man who has been constrained into temporary respectability, and is heartily tired of it."

"I am sorry you have so bad an opinion of him, sir," said George, who could not resist an uneasy impression that his uncle was right, and that the experiment of a renewed intimacy with Routh was not likely to be brilliantly successful, "for I was thinking of consulting him about the best way of finding out Arthur's whereabouts."

"No, no," said Mr. Felton, quickly and emphatically; "say nothing to him about any business of mine; give the man no pretext to fasten an intimacy upon me. We want no cleverness of his kind in our work."

"Very well, sir," said George. He was discontented with his uncle, because he had formed what the young man knew in his heart was a just opinion of Routh, and discontented with himself because he could not combat it. "Of course I will speak of your affairs to no one without your permission. But one thing I must say for Routh, I do think he loves his wife."

"And I think he hates her," said Mr. Felton.

They had turned in their walk, and were close by the little garden gate as he uttered these words. At that moment it opened, and a servant appeared. He told the two gentlemen that Mr. Carruthers wished to see them, and they followed him silently into the house.

* * * * *

"I am quite clear that the experiment may be tried with safety and advantage," said Dr. Merle, at the close of a long conversation with Mr. Felton and George Dallas. Dr. Merle was an elderly gentleman, with a bald head, a thin face, and eyes as piercing, as strong, and as resolute as those of an eagle; a sort of man to be "quite clear" about his ideas and decisions in general. "I have felt persuaded all along that the state of Mrs. Carruthers's nervous system was produced by a shock, though Mr. Carruthers had no knowledge of the fact, and could supply me with no particulars."

Here was a pretty state of things; Mr. Carruthers of Poynings obliged to listen to a stranger informing him that his own wife had received a shock on his own premises without his knowledge, confirming the opinions of two other presuming individuals, and totally indifferent to the effect upon his feelings. But Mr. Carruthers of Poynings bore it wonderfully well. He actually nodded acquiescence towards the presumptuous doctor, and did not feel in the least angry.

"Yes," repeated Dr. Merle, emphatically; "there has been a shock, no doubt about it. The nerves are still very weak, very much shaken, but the general health so much re-established, that I do not anticipate anything but the best results from the attempt to communicate a pleasant and happy impression to Mrs. Carruthers, though, owing to her distressing state just now, that impression must necessarily take the form of a shock also. But"—and Dr. Merle smiled, and looked at each of his hearers in turn—"I think you will agree with me, gentlemen, that there is little, if any,

reliable evidence that any one was ever killed or hurt by an agreeable surprise. Mr. Carruthers has been so good as to convey to me that it would be an agreeable surprise to my patient to see him and her son together, and I am quite clear that the sooner the experiment is tried, and that Mrs. Carruthers knows there is also another pleasure in store for her"—with a bow to Mr. Felton—"the better."

George stood up, and followed his step-father mechanically. His conviction, from the first moment he had heard of his mother's state, had been strong that she would be roused to recollection by the sight of him, and restored to a condition which would permit him to dissipate the delusion which had so terribly affected her. He only knew the secret—he only could undo the ill. Should this fail, he would reveal all to Mr. Felton and to his step-father, whose altered conduct to him had removed the danger of any ill results to his mother from such a revelation.

Mr. Carruthers preceded George across a wide corridor to a large and airy room, where the windows were wide open—where white curtains fluttered in the air, scented by the breath of flowers. Just inside the door he motioned to George to remain there, and then approached a large chair, whose high back hid its occupant from George's sight. He stooped over the chair, and said, in a softer voice than the Poynings household had been accustomed to hear:

"Laura, I have brought some one to see you this morning."

George could not see from where he stood, but he concluded there was a sign of assent, for Mr. Carruthers beckoned him rapidly forward, and the next instant he was by his side, and had seen his mother's face. Another, and his mother had started up, and, with a piercing cry of "George! My son! My son!" had fallen senseless into his arms.

THE VEGETABLE WORLD.

WHILE gazing at the stars, we often wonder which, if any, of those wanderers—and all are wanderers—are inhabited by sentient and intelligent creatures. Our curiosity would be satisfied could we only ascertain which of them possessed a world of vegetables; the rest would follow. Without plants, the existence of animal life is scarcely conceivable: with them—with the sustenance and shelter which they offer in unlimited profusion—we may fairly assume that the Benevolent Being who created *them*, would also create higher organisms to profit by the supplies they furnish.

Plants, therefore, are one of the tests of a planet's habitability. It is they who achieve the first difficult step of converting inorganic into organic material. The moss and the lichen on the naked rock squeeze carbon from the atmosphere; which carbon becomes in time a bed of vegetable mould. Larger and more luxuriant plants succeed, without exterminating, their humble predecessors. Then come insects

and herb-eating animals, to check the plant's luxuriance; and then come the bird and the flesh-eating animal, to thin the swarms of caterpillars and the troops of grazers and browsers.

In the sea, the same sequence occurs. First, sea-plants—not one of which is poisonous, while many are nutritious and medicinal. Then, the mollusk feeding on the sea-plant, and fed on by fishes with teeth of steel and palates of iron. Finally, the innumerable feeders, great and small, who live by preying on one another. Oysters, mussels, cockles, and other shell-fish, who live "by suction"—by microscopic particles brought to them by watery currents caused by the vibration of their cilia—are not a whit less than their greedier neighbours the dependents and the offspring of the vegetable world. The food they take in (however minute), to increase their fleshy growth, is entirely organic; although that flesh secretes from the waters inorganic matters to form their shell. Their diet consists either of minute vegetable particles, or of infusorial animalcules that have fed on vegetables.

The human race tops the ladder of organic life very much in the style of "the House that Jack Built." For this is the sportsman that shot the duck, that swallowed the snail, that gnawed the cabbage, that grew as a plant, in garden ground. And this is the lady that picked the lobster, that killed the codling, that devoured the starfish, that crushed the whelk, that bored the periwinkle, that nibbled the plant, that grew at the bottom of the sea. All flesh is grass, and all fish too.

Animals can do nothing with inorganic materials, unless these have been previously prepared by the vegetable. The vegetable kingdom, therefore, as Jean Macé says, is the vast kitchen in which are cooked the dinners of the animal kingdom. When we eat the ox, it is the grass which *he* has eaten that actually nourishes us. For us, he is a mere intermediary, who transfers to us intact the albumen extracted by his stomach from the juices supplied to him by his pasture-grounds. He is only a waiter in the grand eating-house of nature. The dishes he brings us have been put into his hand ready prepared. Only, to appreciate his services properly, we must remember that the nutritious portions furnished by grass are very small indeed in their weight and dimensions, and that it would be a weary task for our digestion to have to elaborate them one by one. We might be starved to death with our stomachs full, as happened to some unfortunate Australian explorers, who found plenty of nardoo to eat, but nothing else. The ox presents us with those little portions concentrated in a heaped-up plateful; and our stomachs are the gainers by his complaisance.

A world without plants would be, not a wilderness—nothing half so pleasant as that—but a stony solitude. The word "desert" suggests but a faint idea of what a plantless world would be; for even the desert has its oases, and bears at least the traces or the remains of

life. Consequently, plants are mixed up with every epoch and event of our existence. Besides their inestimable usefulness, they are ornamental, and suggestive of higher thoughts. With flowers we crown the blushing bride; with flowers we bedeck the pallid corpse. The spring flowers on the graves of those we love are typical of the resurrection we hope for. Garlands and bouquets are universally the sign of rejoicing and the recompense of virtue. Green boughs show their welcome to the returning hero, the liberator, the messenger of peace. An olive-branch announced the subsidence of the deluge. The forest was the Druids' temple.

Although everybody is interested in plants, it is only quite recently that their organisation and functions have been revealed to us, and that for the most part in works more adapted to the perusal of the learned than for popular instruction. To meet this difficulty, one of our great "vulgarisers," M. Louis Figuier, has written a comprehensive *Histoire des Plantes*, which (without depreciating other elementary works) aims at giving the essential facts and principles of botany, without overloading them with minor details. His object has been to inspire young readers with due admiration of the Divine power and goodness, making it a rational admiration, founded on a knowledge of the Creator's works. For this purpose, he has insisted on a branch of botany almost neglected in introductory treatises, and all but unknown to the world at large, namely, the cryptogamous plants; that is, seaweeds, mosses, mushrooms, lichens, and ferns, respecting whose growth and reproduction modern botanists have made most astounding discoveries.

Of this interesting work we have now a version, *The Vegetable World*, from the spirited publishers who last year gave us *The World Before the Deluge*. A more welcome gift-book can hardly be conceived for givers possessed of moderate means: a portly volume, handsome without and full within, excellently and lavishly illustrated, with luxurious paper and legible type, copiously treating of a subject which interests young and old, rich and poor—a book which may be read again, and referred to, after the first burst of curiosity is satisfied.

Plant a seed—a kidney bean, for instance—in moist garden-mould at a summer temperature, it will soon begin to sprout. It will swell, and then, by the marvellous working of nature, a miniature vegetable will be produced. Two distinct organs will appear. One yellowish in colour, and branched, will make its way downwards into the soil: this is the root. The other, green in hue, will take an opposite direction, rising towards the sky: this is the stem.

It is extraordinary that, in organisms devoid of consciousness, their organs should have a will of their own. The roots of plants are excessively wilful, persisting in following their own devices. They prefer one sort of food to another, and follow it perseveringly. The way in which they triumph over obstacles has

always been a subject of wonder. Checked in their course, they exert mechanical power, splitting rocks and demolishing masonry. Roots are the great destroyers of Indian ruins. A seedling inserts the small end of the wedge; and, in a few years, massive walls are rent asunder. They will follow a run of water for extraordinary distances; they will monopolise the whole cavity of a drain-pipe. They will worm out the soil that suits them best, according as it is wet or dry, light or heavy, sandy or stony. Verily, the selections made by roots manifest the presence of a vital instinct.

Duhamel, a botanist of the last century, relates that, wishing to preserve a field from being exhausted by the roots of an alley of bordering elms, he cut a ditch to intercept the roots. But he found that the roots which escaped the operation descended the slope, burrowed under the bottom of the ditch, and then spread themselves over the field afresh. The Swiss naturalist, Bonnet, went so far as to say that it is sometimes difficult to point out the difference between a cat and a rose-bush. They are alike—at least in their fondness for bones.

The fundamental property of roots is to strike into the soil persistently downwards. They seem to fly from the light of day. The tendency is apparent the moment a germinating seed protrudes its radicle. This is so inherent in the life of every vegetable, that if we try to thwart it—if, for instance, we turn a germinating seed topsy-turvy—the root and the stem will spontaneously change their direction, the one tending downward, the other upward.

What is the cause of all roots thus seeking the centre of the earth? Nobody knows. The force of gravity has had the credit of it; but that force has no sensible influence on bodies reposing in a solid bed like earth. Our great horticulturist, Knight, tried to fathom the secret; but his experiment, to us, is anything but conclusive. He caused kidney beans to sprout, after fastening them to the circumference of a vertical wheel, which was kept continually revolving. He then found that the rootlets were directed outwards, while the young stems tended to the circumference of the wheel, and attributed the circumstance, without doubt rightly, to the action of centrifugal force, assuming, questionably, that the plants had mistaken that force for gravity. But it is evident that the more rapid the revolution of the wheel, the more the position of anything attached to it would be due to mere violence. Plants not broken by a hurricane *bend* their stems, although their natural position is to stand upright. This, and Dutrochet's subsequent experiment with a horizontal wheel, leave our knowledge much as it was before. All we can do is to admit, as Figuier's translator, W. S. O., has well rendered it, "that all is not mechanical in this tendency of roots to bury themselves in the earth. There exists beyond any doubt a real organic faculty belonging to the living plant."

If the root is the beginning and the means,

the fruit is the consummation and the end. Flowers, and sometimes leaves, have only an ephemeral existence. After the fruit is set, they disappear. Their withered and discoloured petals are scattered on the ground or swept away by the winds. In many cases, the plant itself has lost none of its attractions by changing its ornaments. An apple-tree in blossom is a lovely sight in spring; an orchard laden with brilliant fruit is a glorious spectacle in autumn. The modest, unobtrusive flowers of the vine charm us by their mignonette-like perfume; the vineyard, with its purple clusters, deliciously allays our thirst and cheers our hearts with anticipated pleasures. Flowers awake a sentiment of joy and delight: fruits are a pledge of wealth and plenty.

The excess of fruits produced beyond those required for the reproduction of the species, is a proof of the Great Creator's bounty. Fruit affords inexhaustible supplies of food to all His creatures. It would suffice to perpetuate a tree, which lived on an average for a thousand years, if a single seed were produced once in a thousand years, supposing that this seed were never destroyed and could be ensured to germinate in a fitting place. But Linnæus has calculated that if an annual plant produced only two seeds—and there is no plant so unproductive as this—and their seedlings next year produced two, and so on, then in twenty years there would be a million plants. Compare the results of this scanty and underrated increase with the actual yield of our harvests, and it will be evident what an inexhaustible store our Father has provided for us in the produce of the earth.

Nor is it the fruits themselves alone that are nutritive; they often yield, in this respect, to their appendages. We are in the habit of styling "fruit-trees" those only which bear fleshy fruit. Others beside the apricot, the apple, and the peach, have a perfectly legitimate right to that title. All plants, in fact, bear fruit, although many are propagated by other means than by their fruit.

In some fruits, the parts we like best, and for which we value it, is not the fruit at all. What constitutes the strawberry? Is it the fleshy, succulent portion, essentially constituting it, which is the fruit? Certainly not. The true fruits of the strawberry—and they are very numerous—are the little brownish, dry, insipid grains, crunching between the teeth, which remain at the bottom of your plate, mixed with small dark threads, when you mash up strawberries with wine. Sow them in a pan, in light soil, and they will give you multitudes of little strawberry plants. It is thus that new varieties are obtained. The little brownish grains are seeds, hard-named achænia because they do not open [W. S. O. properly gives the explanation and etymology of these learned words]; the small dark threads are the styles of the withered flower. What we eat, then, in the strawberry is the receptacle, which, as it grows, gradually fills with juice. It increases

in size, and—Need we bring the water into your mouth, at this time of year, by eloquently describing a ripe, aromatic, luscious, strawberry?

In the fig, as in the strawberry, the eatable part is formed by a thick, fleshy, and succulent receptacle, of gourd-like shape. The real fruits, which are also achenia, are inserted in the inner surface of the receptacle. But there is this difference between the fig and the strawberry: all the fruits of a strawberry result from one single flower, whereas in a fig all the fruits are the produce of different flowers. Some one has called the fig a fruit turned outside in; and although the definition will not bear strict criticism, as a popular description it is not bad.

An interesting and instructive portion of Figuier's work is that which sketches (with characteristic portraits) the fathers and grand-fathers of botany—a science which, as we understand it, is not yet a couple of centuries old. The fame of Linnæus overshadows that of all his predecessors. He reigned supreme in botany till the close of the eighteenth century.

Linnæus was shrewd, sanguine, self-complacent. (What is the sprig in his button-hole? Is it his favourite "Geum," or the furze he so admired at landing on our shore?) His system was hailed with admiration. It is founded on the numbers of the stamens and pistils in a flower, their disposition amongst themselves, and their distribution on the plants that bear them. Thus we have Class I. Monandria, one stamen; Class II. Diandria, two stamens, &c. Class XII. Icosandria, twenty stamens or more, inserted upon the calyx; Class XIII. Polyandria, twenty stamens or more, inserted upon the receptacle; and so on. Diczia, two houses, is the class which includes species in which all the pistils grow on one plant and all the stamens on another. Of this, familiar examples are hemp, the herb mercury, date palms, willows. His twenty-fourth and last class, Cryptogamia, flowerless plants, was evidently only a provisional receiving-house, to shelter them in until science should assign their fixed place and habitation. It is clear, at least, that he was obliged to separate them from all plants with visible flowers. At first, indeed, he divided all known vegetables into two great groups: those in which the stamens and pistils are apparent, which he called Phanerogamous; and those in which those organs are hidden, which he called Cryptogamous.

Of late years, the Linnæan system has been trampled under foot by botanists, who, although men of eminent ability and learning, lorded it over the science they professed with something approaching to tyranny. Nobody knew anything but they and theirs; all the rest of the world were in outer darkness. Linnæus was an old woman, who had had her day; Withering and Smith were poor creatures, who had never had any day at all. But, in their contempt for Linnæus's skill and simplicity, they forgot to remember, or remembered to forget, that he sent forth his method, not as an

explanation of the various forms displayed in the vegetable kingdom, but as an artificial alphabet to help the inquirer in his reference to the dictionary of the plants which overspread the earth. Like Ray, he guarded his followers against the supposition that his classification was anything more than a means of identification; nor did he pretend to be the author of a system which should be, in every respect, perfect and complete in all its parts. His natural orders suffice to save him from that reproach. He *did* try to distribute plants, according to a natural classification, into families.

Linnæus was a man of genius as well as an industrious labourer. Amongst other reforms, he reduced the name of each plant to two words, the first a substantive, designating the genus, the second an adjective, designating the species. Thus, *Viola odorata* is quite sufficient to denote to us the sweet-smelling violet, as distinct from all other violets and pansies. But, before his time, the name of a genus was followed by a whole sentence describing the species. In proportion as the number of species was larger, the length of the sentences increased, until you feared they would never come to an end. It was absolutely the confusion that would be introduced into society, if, instead of mentioning each individual by a surname and a christian name, we were to suppress the latter, substituting for it the enumeration of that person's distinctive peculiarities. As if, for instance, instead of saying Peter Durand, Louis Durand, Augustus Durand, we were to call them Durand, the tall light-haired fellow; Durand, the young man with a high tenor voice; or Durand, the ragamuffin with a pimpled nose.

The Linnæan, or binary, nomenclature has opened its doors to, and received, every plant discovered since his departure—an unquestionable proof of the real merit of his mode of naming vegetable genera and species.

Of the natural system of botany, founded by Bernard de Jussieu, the best praise is that it is a hearty endeavour to follow nature. If Darwin's theory of the origin of species be true, the natural system, when perfected, will be a correct genealogy, as well as an accurate description, of plants. But to make use of it, as a reference, for the identification of novel plants, the student must have already made progress. It is at present, however, quite in the ascendant as a method of teaching botany.

The editor, therefore, of the English translation of the *Histoire des Plantes*, after a civil word to Robert Brown, who "was no systematist," adheres to the botanical arrangement of the late Dr. Lindley, whose "knowledge of vegetable structure was extensive and profound. His Vegetable Kingdom remains a monument of immense learning, technical knowledge, and vast industry. The modern school of botanists may be said, one and all, to have been his pupils; the system he has framed is probably the nearest to perfection which the world has yet seen; and M. Figuier must ex-

cuse the editor of the English translation when he adopts a system which has superseded all others in the British schools."

CRUEL COPPINGER.

A RECORD of the wild, strange, lawless characters that roamed along the north coast of Cornwall during the middle and latter years of the last century would be a volume full of interest for the student of local history and semi-barbarous life. Therein would be found depicted the rough sea-captain, half smuggler, half pirate, who ran his lugger by beacon-light into some rugged cove among the massive headlands of the shore, and was relieved of his freight by the active and diligent "country-side." This was the name allotted to that chosen troop of native sympathisers who were always ready to rescue and conceal the stores that had escaped the degradation of the gauger's brand. Men yet alive relate with glee how they used to rush, at some well-known signal, to the strand, their small active horses shaved from forelock to tail, smoother than any modern clip, well soaped or greased from head to foot, so as to slip easily out of any hostile grasp; and then, with a double keg or pack slung on to every nag by a single girth, away went the whole herd, led by some swift well-trained mare, to the inland cave or rocky hold, the shelter of their spoil. There was a famous dun mare—she lived to the age of thirty-seven, and died within legal memory—almost human in her craft and fidelity, who is said to have led a bevy of loaded pack-horses, unassisted by driver or guide, from Bossinney Haun to Rough-tor Point. But, beside these travellers by sea, there would be found, ever and anon, in some solitary farm-house inaccessible by wheels, and only to be approached by some treacherous foot-path along bog and mire, a strange and nameless guest—often a foreigner in language and apparel—who had sought refuge with the native family, and who paid in strange but golden coins for his shelter and food; some political or private adventurer, perchance, to whom secrecy and concealment were safety and life, and who more than once lived and died in his solitary hiding-place on the moor.

There is a bedstead of carved oak still in existence at Trevotter—a farm among the midland hills—whereon for long years an unknown stranger slept. None ever knew his nation or name. He occupied a solitary room, and only emerged now and then for a walk in the evening air. An oaken chest of small size contained his personal possessions and gold of foreign coinage, which he paid into the hands of his host with the solemn charge to conceal it until he was gone thence or dead—a request which the simple-hearted people faithfully fulfilled. His linen was beautifully fine, and his garments richly embroidered. After some time he sickened and died, refusing firmly the visits of the local clergyman, and bequeathing to the farmer the contents of his chest. He

wrote some words, they said, for his own tombstone, which, however, were not allowed to be engraved, but they were simply these: "H. De. R. Eques & Esul." The same sentence was found, after his death, carved on the ledge of his bed, and the letters are, or lately were, still traceable on the mouldering wood.

But among the legends of local renown a prominent place has always been allotted to a personage whose name has descended to our times linked to a weird and graphic epithet:—"Cruel Coppinger." There was a ballad in existence within human memory which was founded on the history of this singular man, but of which the first verse only can now be recovered. It runs:

Will you hear of the Cruel Coppinger?

He came from a foreign kind:

He was brought to us by the salt water,

He was carried away by the wind.

His arrival on the north coast of Cornwall was signalled by a terrific hurricane. The storm came up Channel from the south-west. The shore and the heights were dotted with watchers for wreck—those daring gleaners of the harvest of the sea. It was just such a scene as is sought for in the proverb of the West:

A savage sea and a shattering wind,

The cliffs before, and the gale behind.

As suddenly as if a phantom ship had loomed in the distance, a strange vessel of foreign rig was discovered in fierce struggle with the waves of Harty Race. She was deeply laden or water-logged, and rolled heavily in the trough of the sea, nearing the shore as she felt the tide. Gradually the pale and dismayed faces of the crew became visible, and among them one man of herculean height and mould, who stood near the wheel with a speaking-trumpet in his hand. The sails were blown to rags, and the rudder was apparently lashed for running ashore. But the suck of the current and the set of the wind were too strong for the vessel, and she appeared to have lost her chance of reaching Harty Pool. It was seen that the tall seaman, who was manifestly the skipper of the boat, had cast off his garments, and stood prepared upon the deck to encounter a battle with the surges for life and rescue. He plunged over the bulwarks, and arose to sight buffeting the seas. With stalwart arm and powerful chest he made his way through the surf, rode manfully from billow to billow, until, with a bound, he stood at last upright upon the sand, a fine stately semblance of one of the old Vikings of the northern seas. A crowd of people had gathered from the land, on horseback and on foot, women as well as men, drawn together by the tidings of a probable wreck. Into their midst, and to their astonished dismay, rushed the dripping stranger; he snatched from a terrified old dame her red Welsh cloak, cast it loosely around him, and bounded suddenly upon the crupper of a young damsel who had ridden her father's horse down to the beach to see the sight. He grasped her bridle, and, shouting aloud in some foreign language, urged on the double-laden animal into full speed, and the horse naturally took his

homeward way. Strange and wild were the outcries that greeted the rider, Miss Dinah Hamlyn, when, thus escorted, she reached her father's door, in the very embrace of a wild, rough, tall man, who announced himself by a name—never afterwards forgotten in those parts—as Coppinger, a Dane. He arrayed himself without the smallest scruple in the Sunday suit of his host. The long-skirted coat of purple velvet with large buttons, the embroidered vest, and nether garments to match, became him well. So thought the lady of his sudden choice. She, no doubt, forgave his onslaught on her and on her horse for the compliment it conveyed. He took his immediate place at the family board, and on the settle by the hearth, as though he had been the most welcome and long-invited guest in the land. Strange to say, the vessel disappeared immediately he had left her deck, nor was she ever after traced by land or sea. At first, the stranger subdued all the fierce phases of his savage character, and appeared deeply grateful for all the kindness he received at the hands of his simple-hearted host. Certain letters which he addressed to persons of high name in Denmark were, or were alleged to be, duly answered, and remittances from his friends were supposed to be received. He announced himself as of a wealthy family and superior rank in his native country, and gave out that it was to avoid a marriage with a titled lady that he had left his father's house and gone to sea. All this recommended him to the unsuspecting Dinah, whose affections he completely won. Her father's sudden illness postponed their marriage. The good old man died to be spared much evil to come.

The Dane succeeded almost naturally to the management and control of the house, and the widow held only an apparent influence in domestic affairs. He soon persuaded the daughter to become his wife, and immediately afterwards his evil nature, so long smouldering, broke out like a wild beast unaged. All at once the house became the den and refuge of every lawless character on the coast. All kinds of wild uproar and reckless revelry appalled the neighbourhood day and night. It was discovered that an organised band of desperadoes, smugglers, wreckers, and poachers, were embarked in a system of bold adventure, and that "Cruel Coppinger" was their captain. In those days, and in that unknown and far-away region, the peaceable inhabitants were totally unprotected. There was not a single resident gentleman of property or weight in the entire district; and the clergyman, quite insulated from associates of his own standing, was cowed into silence and submission. No revenue officer durst exercise vigilance west of the Tamar; and to put an end to all such surveillance at once, it was well known that one of the "Cruel" gang had chopped off a gauger's head on the gunwale of a boat, and carried the body off to sea.

Amid such scenes, Coppinger pursued his unlawful impulses without check or restraint.

Strange vessels began to appear at regular intervals on the coast, and signals were duly flashed from the headlands to lead them into the safest creek or cove. If the ground-sea were too strong to allow them to run in, they anchored outside the surf, and boats prepared for that service were rowed or hauled to and fro, freighted with illegal spoil. Amongst these vessels, one, a full-rigged schooner, soon became ominously conspicuous. She bore the name of the Black Prince, and was the private property of the Dane, built to his own order in a dockyard of Denmark. She was for a long time the chief terror of the Cornish Channel. Once with Coppinger on board, when, under chase, she led a revenue cutter into an intricate channel near the Gull Rock, where, from knowledge of the bearings, the Black Prince escaped scathless, while the king's vessel perished with all on board. In those times, if any landsman became obnoxious to Coppinger's men, he was either seized by violence or by craft, and borne away, handcuffed, to the deck of the Black Prince; where, to save his life, he had to enrol himself, under fearful oaths, as one of the crew. In 1835, an old man of the age of ninety-seven related to the writer that, when a youth, he had been so abducted, and after two years' service had been ransomed by his friends with a large sum. "And all," said the old man, very simply, "because I happened to see one man kill another, and they thought I should mention it."

Amid such practices ill-gotten gold began to flow and ebb in the hands of Coppinger. At one time he chanced to hold enough money to purchase a freehold farm bordering on the sea. When the day of transfer arrived, he and one of his followers appeared before the astonished lawyer with bags filled with various kinds of foreign coin. Dollars and ducats, doubloons and pistoles, guineas—the coinage of every foreign country with a seaboard—were displayed on the table. The man of law at first demurred to such purchase-money; but, after some controversy, and an ominous oath or two of "that or none," the lawyer agreed to take it by weight. The document bearing Coppinger's name is still extant. His signature is traced in stern, bold, fierce characters, as if every letter had been stabbed upon the parchment with the point of a dirk. Underneath his autograph, also in his own writing, is the word "Thuro."

Long impunity increased Coppinger's daring. There were certain byways and bridle-roads along the fields over which he exercised exclusive control. Although every one had a perfect right by law to use these ways, he issued orders that no man was to pass over them by night, and accordingly from that hour none ever did. They were called "Coppinger's Tracks." They all converged at a headland which had the name of Steeple Brink. Here the cliff sheered off, and stood three hundred feet of perpendicular height, a precipice of smooth rock toward the beach, with an overhanging face one hundred feet down from the brow. There was a

hollow entrance into the cliff, like a huge cathedral door, crowned and surrounded with natural Saxon arches, curved by the strata of native stone. Within was an arched and vaulted cave, vast and gloomy; it ran a long way into the heart of the land, and was as large and tall—so the country-people said—as a Kilhampton church. This stronghold was inaccessible by natural means, and could only be approached by a cable ladder lowered from above and made fast below on a projecting crag. It received the name of “Coppinger’s Cave,” and was long the scene of fierce and secret revelry, that would be utterly inconceivable to the educated mind of the nineteenth century. Here sheep were tethered to the rock, and fed on stolen hay and corn till their flesh was required for a feast; kegs of brandy and hollands were piled around; chests of tea; and iron-bound sea-chests contained the chattels and the revenues of the Coppinger royalty of the sea. No man ever essayed the perilous descent into the cavern except the captain’s own troop; and their loyalty was secured not only by their participation in his crimes, but by a terrible oath.

The terror linked with Coppinger’s name throughout the coast was so extreme that the people themselves, wild and lawless as they were, submitted to his sway as though he had been the lord of the soil and they his vassals. Such a household as Coppinger’s, was, of course, far from happy or calm. Although when his wife’s father died he had insensibly acquired possession of the stock and farm, there remained in the hands of the widow a considerable amount of money as her dower. This he obtained from the poor helpless woman by instalments; and when pretext and entreaty alike failed, he resorted to a novel mode of levy. He fastened his wife to the pillar of her oak bedstead, and called her mother into the room. He then explained that it was his purpose to flog Dinah with the sea-cat which he flourished in his hand until her mother had transferred to him such an amount as he required of her reserved property. This deed of atrocity he repeated until he had utterly exhausted the widow’s store. He had a favourite mare, so fierce and indomitable that none but Coppinger himself could venture on her back, and so fleet and strong that he owed his escape from more than one menacing peril by her speed and endurance. The clergyman had spoken above his breath of the evil doings in the cave, and had thus aroused his wrath and vengeance. On a certain day he was jogging homeward on his parish cob, and had reached the middle of a wide and desolate heath. All at once he heard behind him the clattering of horse-hoofs and a yell such as might have burst from the throat of the visible demon when he hurled the battle on the ancient saint. It was Cruel Coppinger with his double-thonged whip, mounted on his terrible mare. Down came the fearful scourge on his victim’s shuddering shoulders. Escape was impossible. The poor parson knew too well the difference between his own ambling galloway, that never

essayed any swifter pace than a jog-trot, and that awful steed behind him with footsteps like the storm. Circling, doubling like a hare, twisting aside, crying aloud for mercy, all was vain. He arrived at last at his own house, striped like a zebra, and as he rushed in at the gate he heard the parting scoff of his assailant: “There, parson, I have paid my tithe in full; never mind the receipt.”

It was on the self-same animal that Coppinger performed another freak. He had passed a festive evening at a farm-house, and was about to take his departure, when he spied at the corner of the hearth a little tailor of the country-side, who went from house to house to exercise his calling. He was a half-witted, harmless old fellow, and answered to the name of Uncle Tom Tape.

“Ha! Uncle Tom,” cried Coppinger, “we both travel the same road, and I don’t mind giving thee a hoist behind me on the mare.”

The old man cowered in the settle. He would not encumber the gentleman; was unaccustomed to ride such a spirited horse. But all his excuses were overborne. The other guests, entering into the joke, assisted the trembling old man to mount the crupper of the capering mare. Off she bounded, and Uncle Tom, with his arms cast with the strong gripe of terror around his bulky companion, held on like grim death. Unbuckling his belt, Coppinger passed it around Uncle Tom’s thin haggard body, and buckled it on his own front. When he had firmly secured his victim, he loosened his reins, and urged the mare with thong and spur into a furious gallop. Onward they rushed, till they fled past the tailor’s own door at the roadside, where his startled wife, who was on the watch, afterwards declared “she caught sight of her husband clinging on to a rainbow.” Loud and piteous were the outcries of Tailor Tom, and earnest his shrieks of entreaty that he might be told where he was to be carried that night, and for what doom he had been buckled on. At last, in a relaxation of their pace going up a steep hill, Coppinger made him a confidential communication.

“I have been,” he said, “under a long promise to the devil, that I would bring him a tailor to make and mend for him, poor man; and as sure as I breathe, Uncle Tom, I mean to keep my word to-night!”

The agony of terror produced by this revelation produced such convulsive spasms, that at last the belt gave way, and the tailor fell off like a log among the gorse at the roadside. There he was found next morning in a semi-delirious state, muttering at intervals, “No, no; I never will. Let him mend his breeches with his own drag-chain, as the saying is. I will never so much as thread a needle for Coppinger nor for his friend.”

One boy was the only fruit of poor Dinah’s marriage with the Dane. But his birth brought neither gladness nor solace to his mother’s miserable hearth. He was fair and golden-haired, and had his father’s fierce, flashing eyes. But though perfectly well-formed and healthful, he

was born deaf and dumb. He was mischievous and ungovernable from his birth. His cruelty to animals, birds, and to other children, was intense. Any living thing that he could torture appeared to yield him delight. With savage gestures and jabbering moans he haunted the rocks along the shore, and seemed like some uncouth creature cast up by the sea. When he was only six years old, he was found one day upon the brink of a tall cliff, bounding with joy, and pointing downward towards the beach with convulsions of delight. There, mangled by the fall, and dead, they found the body of a neighbour's child of his own age, who was his frequent companion, and whom, as it was inferred, he had drawn towards the steep precipice, and urged over by stratagem or force. The spot where this occurred was ever afterwards his favourite haunt. He would draw the notice of any passer-by to the place, and then point downward where the murdered child was found with fierce exultant mockery. It was a saying evermore in the district, that, as a judgment on his father's cruelty, his child had been born without a human soul. He lived to be the pestilent scourge of the neighbourhood.

But the end arrived. Money had become scarce, and the resources of the cave began to fail. More than one armed king's cutter were seen day and night hovering off the land. Foreigners visited the house with tidings of peril. So he, "who came with the water, went with the wind." His disappearance, like his arrival, was commemorated by a turbulent storm. A wrecker, who had gone to watch the shore, saw, as the sun went down, a full-rigged vessel standing off and on. By-and-by a rocket hissed up from the Gull Rock, a small islet with a creek on the landward side which had been the scene of many a run of smuggled cargo. A gun from the ship answered it, and again both signals were exchanged. At last a well-known and burly form stood on the topmost crag of the island rock. He waved his sword, and the light flashed back from the steel. A boat put off from the vessel, with two hands at every oar; for the tide runs with double violence through Harty Race. They neared the rocks, rode daringly through the surf, and were steered by some practised coxswain into the Gull Creek. There they found their man. Coppinger leaped on board the boat, and assumed the command. They made with strong efforts for their ship. It was a path of peril through that boiling surf. Still, bending at the oar like chained giants, the man watched them till they forced their way through the battling waters. Once, as they drew off the shore, one of the rowers, either from ebbing strength or loss of courage, drooped at his oar. In a moment a cutlass gleamed over his head, and a fierce stern stroke cut him down. It was the last blow of Cruel Coppinger. He and his boat's crew boarded the vessel, and she was out of sight in a moment, like a spectre or a ghost. Thunder, lightning, and hail ensued. Trees were rent up by the roots around the pirate's abode. Poor Dinah watched, and held in her shuddering arms her idiot-boy, and, strange to say, a meteoric stone,

called in that country a storm-bolt, fell through the roof into the room, at the very feet of Cruel Coppinger's vacant chair.

MRS. WINSOR'S VIEWS OF CRIMINAL LAW.

THE world has not forgotten certain recent trials for murder in the western counties. The "quiet west country" has obtained of late an unenviable notoriety in that line. What change has come over the spirit of Arcadia?

The spring assize of last year (1865), on the Western Circuit, was especially remarkable for two trials, which must henceforth rank among the most noted of our "causes célèbres." Had Thomas de Quincey been yet alive they might have enriched our literature with a supplementary treatise on "Murder as one of the Fine Arts." What a companion-picture the histories of Constance Kent and Charlotte Winsor would have formed to the terribly dramatic Marr murders!*

Constance Kent and Charlotte Winsor were no criminals of the whining kind. The poleaxe, anti-cattle-plague methods of action that Mr. Williams affected, were child's play, compared to the deadly dealings of those assassins of the softer sex. As for the Road murderess, to this hour there are hundreds who refuse to believe in the guilt of the self-accused criminal. The indiscretions of the clergyman who received her confession were sufficiently punished by the magistrates, who wouldn't let him be a martyr. It was he who brought so hard a heart, so perverted a mind, and so stubborn a will, to acknowledge the need, if not of repentance, of atonement. In that last word is to be found the key to the whole story of Constance Kent. To exact atonement for the imagined wrong done to her mother, she resolutely destroyed what the supposed author of that wrong loved best on earth. To atone for that crime to the world, to the father whose life she had blasted with the public belief in his guilt, she came forward as resolutely to offer her own life. There is a strange fascination in reflecting on that character; a character which, if the writer's theory be correct, would have won for its possessor a foremost place among those whom primitive and savage races delight to honour. And yet the face of Constance Kent expressed to those who studied it at her trial only one characteristic:—stupidity.

A very different criminal was Mrs. Charlotte Winsor. The woman did not live in the sort of abode which a vivid imagination might picture as the retreat of such a monster. A comfortable cottage, visible from the windows of the South Devon train as it approaches Torquay, was the scene of her peculiar industry—an industry exercised, it is said, not only in that line which has made her famous. The story goes that she used to give "entertainments" of a pecu-

* A recent article in ALL THE YEAR ROUND has directed public attention to that singular story.

liar kind of singing and dancing, at the neighbouring public-houses, finding reward in occasional glasses of Torkavian gin, or the less frequent halfpenny. On one occasion she is fabled to have decoyed a young farmer, of a feeble turn of mind but in comfortable circumstances, into her cottage in the gloaming, before her husband (who seems to have been innocent of any knowledge of the manner in which his partner beguiled her leisure hours) had returned from his day's work, to have secured him with strong rope, and then, producing a carving-knife, calmly proposed to inflict wounds upon him in default of a round sum for ransom. The alarmed bucolic paid and escaped; but never, it is said, disclosed this adventure until his tormentress was lodged within the walls of Exeter jail. Charlotte must have found such ready-money transactions more gratifying than the bad debts which she sometimes incurred in the more ordinary course of her business; indeed, it is strange that so acute a practitioner should have given credit so freely in a class of contracts which the law would scarcely have recognised as binding. There was something almost pathetic in her reproaches to a young woman whom she had "done for before," and who coolly asked for a renewal of her services, without having paid the three and sixpence contracted to be paid on the first occasion.

The circumstances which led to the arrest of Charlotte Winsor and Mary Harris for the murder of the latter's male child are fresh in the memory of the legion of newspaper readers. When the prisoners were first put on their trial together, there was little foreshadowing of the interest which the case was afterwards to assume. There were vague rumours afloat, touching the prisoner Winsor's character—hints of horrid stories hushed up, of lost children unaccounted for, of the odd reputation of the cottage by the railway; but nothing that might not be explained by a natural popular prejudice against the most unprepossessing specimen of womanhood that ever graced a dock. Nerver was the brand of evil stamped in such full relief upon a face. Perfectly still and unmoved she sat all through the trial, with an eye as fixed and expressionless as glass; this eye she kept riveted upon the clerk of assize—to his manifest discomfort, and much after the manner of a student of electro-biology staring at the magic circle. The mere fascination of that lacklustre orb might have been the death, of countless innocents. If there were any speculation in it at all, it seemed to have for its subject the relative amount of boredom involved in her own position and that of the worthy officer whom she was contemplating. At times, too, she might have been regretting that three and sixpence.

No greater contrast could have been presented to this woman's manner than the look and demeanour of the younger prisoner. A pretty and attractive girl, overwhelmed with shame and terror, sobbing from the beginning to the end of the weary trial, as if her heart would

break. The sympathies of everybody in court seemed to be hers from the first. Even among the proverbially hard-hearted barristers who heard and weighed the damning evidence against her, there were some who could not resist a belief in her innocence: still less, a hope that the jury would let her off. One of the witnesses, a lady in whose service she had lived, spoke of her as an exceptionally tender and careful nurse in cases of sickness.

Her counsel had a great opportunity, and did not neglect it. Sublime were his appeals to the feelings of that poor girl's twelve intelligent fellow-countrymen—heartrending his disquisitions on maternity—pathetic his peroration. But how was it possible to feel or to create sympathy for so forbidding a client as Mrs. Charlotte Winsor, who, after favouring her advocate with one dull stare, relapsed into her morbid contemplation of the clerk of assize, as if he offered, on the whole, a more profitable theme for speculation? The learned counsel did what he could. He pictured the happy domestic hearth of the British matron, with peace on the right and tranquillity on the left (immediately corrected, with much geographical discrimination, into peace on the left and tranquillity on the right), contrasted it with its desolate condition in the matron's absence, and ended by "leaving the prisoner's cause with confidence," &c. Devonshire jurymen are skilful at concealing their ideas (or the absence of them), and it was impossible to judge what impression the defence made upon that distinguished body of our fellow-countrymen. Charlotte herself did not appear to think much of it, though apparently wondering what effect it made on the mind of the clerk of assize. It was at about six o'clock on a Saturday evening when the jury retired to consider their verdict. How long they deliberated is matter of history, only to find at midnight that they could not agree. "How can you expect it, with such fellows as them in a box?" exclaimed one indignant member of the body: a well-to-do farmer with a face like Mr. Rogers, of the Haymarket, in Cool as a Cucumber. The exquisite good sense of our law was made manifest by the judge being placed in the dilemma of finding himself forced to choose between dismissing the puzzled twelve on the spot, locking them up till Monday morning without food or fire, or, as a last alternative, sapping the foundations of the Church of England by taking a verdict (if he could get one) on the Sabbath-day.

It had been a curious scene in court during the hours of waiting for the verdict. The buzz of excited interest and general speculation as to the result, which rose on the retirement of the jury, grew more and more intermittent until it was lulled into a weary silence and a languid curiosity, only strong enough—as what feeling is not?—to keep the crowd in their places while the hours rolled by. The lawyers dropped off one by one, as the calls of appetite became more pressing, till only two or three of them, keener or younger than their fellows, remained to keep watch, white-wigged and sleepy-eyed,

in the narrow and uncomfortable pen which a considerate country sets apart "for barristers only," waiting on from minute to minute in the conviction that the jury "must make up their minds soon." Gradually a few of the diners gravitated back again, serenely superior in the nothing-can-touch-me feeling of the epicure. The prisoners were of course removed while their fate was in the balance, and the clerk of assize seemed almost consoled for his enforced abstinence from dinner, by the extinction of the baleful light of Mrs. Winsor's eye. Never was lammer and more impotent conclusion than the upshot of that first trial, when the jury "gave it up," and when the miserable prisoners were once more placed at the bar, to learn that money, time, and wits, have been wasted, and that they must again to the prison whence they came, there to wait till the time should come for the terrible and wearing ordeal to be gone through again. Harris, by this time, had sobbed herself into a state almost of indifference; bewilderment seemed the uppermost feeling in her mind when this result was announced. As for Winsor, her face showed no appreciable feeling whatever: only, as she left the dock, she bestowed a parting glare, more in sorrow than in anger, on the clerk of assize.

The season changed, and once more the two prisoners were placed at the bar. The Winsor-Harris case had acquired new interest in the interval. It was known that we were not, this time, to sit through a mere second edition of the old trial, but that one of the most dangerous anomalies of our law was to be brought into play, and Harris was to be admitted approver against her accomplice. The peculiar atmosphere of suspicion and dislike which surrounds a "sneak" in every condition of life, dispelled most of the sympathy which Harris's good looks and tears had won for her at the first trial. Nor were those looks as good now as then. The face had changed strangely; it was sharpened and lined, and hardened too, I thought: with an odd scared look about the eyes, as if Harris had been perpetually speculating on what was to become of her, and entertained very vague notions touching the results of "turning Queen's evidence." Mrs. Winsor, on the other hand, looked much more human than before—as a legendary witch might, after being suspended for a time from the use of the broomstick—but not a whit less dogged or impassible. Once, and once only, she cried, or tried to cry; but it was only for a moment, and she relapsed into utter indifference to everything and everybody, except the clerk of assize: whom she apparently took up, as it were, where she had left him off some months before. But she gave one glance now and then—as when Harris left the dock for the witness-box—which darkly suggested Artemus Ward's frame of mind when a gentleman who had "done" him expressed a hope that they might meet in the happy huntin' grounds: "If we *du*, there'll be a fight."

I am not going to recapitulate Harris's evidence. The hideous story she told of Winsor's proposal to her, and of how she considered it;

how she took up her quarters, at length, in Winsor's house, her mind made up, and her purpose half avowed; how they discussed ways and means over a cup of tea, while the professional child-murderess related her previous experiences without reserve, and with a satisfaction only qualified by the retrospect of bad debts; how, at length, the thing was quietly done while the mother waited in the next room—all this was told at length. It was not the details of the story to which we listened, that gave to the telling of that story its greatest horror. It was the manner in which it was told. Even the case-hardened barrister who put the necessary questions could scarcely ask them in the usual matter-of-fact way. No such misgivings troubled the witness Harris. In an attitude of quiet, respectful attention, her pretty face expressing nothing but the ordinary embarrassment of a young woman in the witness-box—perhaps even with a shade more of self-possession than is usual in such a case—her sweet and low, but perfectly firm voice recalling to the memory what had been testified in her favour about her tenderness in sickness—without a trace of hesitation in her manner, without a sign of shame or shrinking, she told her story. Any one coming suddenly into court, knowing nothing of the subject-matter of the trial, would have said, on first seeing and hearing her, "What a pretty, modest girl! And how truthful and straightforward!" and would have thought that she was telling an every-day story about some little piece of household peculation. It was impossible to doubt the truth of her evidence. Dangerous as it must always be to permit one prisoner, herself arraigned and unacquitted, to convict another of the very crime with which she is charged, nobody could, in this case, suppose that injustice was done to Winsor. The effect which the telling of that story made upon most of the crowd who filled the court, was very strange. The manner of the witness seemed to affect them with the feeling that this was but an every-day occurrence.

The palladium of British liberties is often dense; in Devonshire it is apt to be denser than elsewhere; and at this trial it had a denser look than is usual even in Devonshire. None of the twelve good men and true seemed to take any very great interest in the affair; and the gaping foreman was on the broad grin all the time: as if the whole thing were an excellent joke. Of the public, to judge by their faces, some were interested, some amused, some bored, a few impressed. Yet the kindly gentleman and upright judge who tried the case has himself told the present writer that he never, in all his experience, met with anything so shocking, and so haunting to the memory.

With the conviction and sentence of Charlotte Winsor, all but the final scene might have been supposed concluded. But she was to be the central figure of two more trials. Exeter had done with her; but Westminster claimed her. At the last moment before her appointed execution, judicial wisdom in high places made the discovery that she ought never to have been tried the second time; that a murderer

whose trial happened to finish on a Saturday evening, at too late an hour for the jury to be able to bring their twelve powerful minds to an unanimous conclusion before midnight, was no murderer in the eye of the law, however clear the facts; but must escape scot-free. The Sunday must be respected. On Sunday no verdict can be received. Therefore the jury must be kept, if kept at all, till the Monday morning. But during the hours of detention, being justly regarded as atrocious criminals set to catch one of their own sort, they must not be allowed food to eat, or fire to be warmed by. If, at the close of twenty-four hours, the twelve can by these persuasive methods be induced to be reasonable, and to see things in one and the same light, well and good; if not, then the methods must continue until one of them be taken ill; and then, but not till then, the fraternity must be dismissed, to dine and to be warmed at their own discretion. And once dismissed—so ran the argument—the prisoner must be dismissed too, for no one can be tried twice for the same offence. With much expenditure of time and learning was this point laboured.

Of course the Sunday was the difficulty. The twelve might have been locked up for a night, and been none the worse. They would have been pretty sure to have agreed in the morning. But to lock them up foodless from Saturday night till Monday morning would, it was felt, have been too strong a measure; Sunday, though a "dies non" in law, being, through a perversity of Nature, as much a "dies" as any other day in the matter of stomachs. But rather even that, it was contended, than that a prisoner's life should twice be jeopardised. Let the jury starve and shiver themselves into unanimity. Let them be carried about in carts after the judge on circuit. (Such, it appears, was the wholesome practice of our ancestors.) *Fiat justitia, ruat jura!* Not once only, but twice was Charlotte Winsor's counsel instructed to maintain this argument before the assembled judges; and twice was Charlotte brought up to Westminster to listen. Four times did the wretched woman hear her advocate's orations from beginning to end—the only living soul who did. The bitterness of death was a long time in passing. It did pass, though, at last. "The point" was finally decided against her, and for the third time she was left for execution. Her sentence was finally commuted, in just consideration of the time she had been kept waiting, into penal servitude for life.

Harris was, of course, set free; but not until she, too, had had her further experience of the delicate machinery of the criminal law. She was kept in prison till the spring assizes of this present year (1866), then was once more placed at the bar for the murder of her child. The proceedings were "merely formal" this time. One by one, twelve jurymen were solemnly sworn to try her conscientiously, and true verdicts give according to the evidence, so help them God! and all the usual

preliminaries of a trial for murder were gone through. Then the counsel for the prosecution informed the court that he "proposed to offer no evidence;" the judge informed the jury that they must therefore say that the prisoner was "not guilty;" and they said so. Then the prisoner was removed. Then she was called again. The grand jury had found a true bill against her, and she had been "tried" and acquitted on that. But at the coroner's inquest it had also been determined that she should be tried; and it is within the discretion of counsel to carry on the prosecution on the finding of the coroner's jury, even though the grand jury throw out the bill. So, one by one, the twelve jurors were all sworn again, to the same solemn effect; again the court was informed that no evidence would be offered; again the judge told the jury to acquit; again the jury obeyed the judge; and then the farce was really over; and everybody was supposed to be much impressed. Harris looked more bewildered than ever (well she might!) as she went away.

The reflections of Mrs. Winsor under these experiences would be a curious study: the rather as she seems to have been a woman of grim humour. It has been the destiny of that weird old woman to give more trouble, to waste more time and money, and to sit longer in courts of justice, than any other criminal of ancient or modern times. To bring down the excellent Calcraft on three fruitless errands to Exeter; to have her scaffold thrice built and her grave thrice dug; to speculate much and long, in uneducated astonishment, on the eccentricities of the English law; to meditate on the difference, which has puzzled wiser heads than hers, between judges in banc and judges off it; and to be occupied for months (unknown) in the solution of Hamlet's problem, "To be, or not to be"—this was a "simple coming-in for one woman." Numberless stories are current in the west, of her sayings and doings during her imprisonment. She grew very impatient of the law's delay, it is said, before the final arrangements were made. Death had no terrors for her, nor life either; but she abhorred uncertainty. She was very cheerful when first awaiting her execution; consoled with her husband on his approaching loss, at the same time pleasantly advising him to take another wife as soon as he could, for he would never get on without one. Her first sensation, when the event was put off, and she found that still she was not to be set free, was one rather of annoyance than otherwise, deepening into strong disgust when the second reprieve came. "Let 'em hang me, or let 'em let me alone," she said; "I don't like being made a fool of." At another time: "I've told 'em I done it" (she confessed her complicity in the murder, but always maintained that Harris was the chief agent), "what do they want more?"

Shallow logic! though at first sight not without force. She consoled with her husband on the provoking uncertainty in his further matrimonial arrangements, of which she was the un-

willing cause; but her indignation culminated when she was removed from the condemned cell, after twelve months' tenancy, to make room for a wretched woman condemned for poisoning her husband, who had not been tried on a Saturday, and who, no minnikin-pin's "point" being in her case discoverable for reservation, had to be hung "on the merits." This unjust eviction almost wrung tears from the stubborn eyes of Winsor.

Such little anecdotes may be but "ben trovati;" but they show the general impression of the woman's character. The conviction that she was callous and indifferent to an incredible degree, may console those who reflect on the terrible suffering, the bitterness worse than death, which any being with like passions and feelings to our own, must have endured during those long months of suspense.

A strange commentary on our criminal laws do the Winsor trials furnish. The execution of so great a criminal in cold blood, after so long a lapse of time, was felt to be an impossibility. So she ended by escaping a fate which was never more richly deserved, through a legal quibble which was not supposed, by any one capable of judging, to be worth one drop of ink in all the galleons that were shed for it, or one syllable of the four elaborate orations which it wrung from the eloquence of a pertinacious counsel. There was "nothing in it," every lawyer, without exception, said when it was first raised, and has said ever since; nothing in it, except the escape from justice of the most notorious and brutal murderess of our time, and except an unparalleled encouragement to criminals to calculate on the chances of impunity, and except the bringing into contempt of our whole system of criminal procedure. So much the better, perhaps, if there were any chance (which there is not) that this bungling business might lead to a careful investigation and radical reform of that system. Not long ago, I heard one of our criminal judges say to a jury who acquitted two coiners: "The longer I live, the less respect I have for our criminal law. You have done quite right in acquitting, for you had no choice on the evidence before you. But if we had a criminal system, I won't say founded on, but remotely connected with, the principles of common sense, those two prisoners wouldn't have escaped. But we haven't, and so it don't matter." I never revered a judge as I revered that judge.

SHOEMAKERS' HOLIDAY.

DIPPING, the other day, into Goldsmith, we found the above phrase, applied to the amiable doctor's habitual visits to those suburban places of entertainment which, in his time, made Islington merit the name of "merry." Sometimes he would make up a party of four or five of his "jolly pigeon friends," as he styled them, to enjoy a "Shoemakers' Holiday." White Conduit Tea Gardens were then a centre of attraction. Curiously enough, the tavern so

named was in process of erection during the reign of Charles the First, and the workmen engaged on the building were regaling themselves upon its completion at the very moment of the monarch's decapitation at Whitehall. The charms of the gardens were set forth in poems, and the characters of their visitors described as follows:

Here prig with prig holds conference polite,
And indiscriminate the gaudy beau
And sloven mix. Here he, who all the week
Took bearded mortals by the nose, or sat
Weaving dead hairs, and whistling wretched strain,
And eke the sturdy youth, whose trade it is
Stout oxen to contund, with gold-bound hat
And silken stocking strut. The red-armed belle
Here shows her tasty gown, proud to be thought
The butterfly of fashion: and, forsooth,
Her haughty mistress deigns for once to tread
The same unhallow'd floor.

These scenes, though still fresh in the memory of many still alive, are no longer possible. Where once were green fields, is now a labyrinth of streets; where once bowling-greens, tea-arbours, and a fish-pond, are now rows of dwelling-houses. The ancient conduit has long been ruined, its channel choked with filth, and its leaden pipes left to decay. Islington was then full of curiosities which are no longer curious, but which Goldsmith regarded as worthy of observation. "Having surveyed," he writes, "the curiosities of this fair and beautiful town, I proceeded forward, leaving a fair stone building on my right; here the inhabitants of London often assemble to celebrate a feast of hot rolls and butter. Seeing such numbers, each with their little tables before them, employed on this occasion, must, no doubt, be a very amusing sight to the looker-on, but still more so to those who perform in the solemnity." To enjoy or to share in such a spectacle, the Londoner must now journey further on—say, to Highbury Barn, where he may find a much larger cockney paradise, with a dancing-platform and a handsome theatre, with a good company, under excellent musical direction, and a stage adorned with picturesque scenery.

Goldsmith, in thus condescending to the conditions of enjoyment that might be commanded by any shoemaker of his day, was not conscious of doing anything snobbish. No doubt such places were, and are, vulgar places, but the word only expresses the degree of their popularity. Who recollects not Sir Walter Scott's admonition to his daughter, not to despise vulgar things merely on that account, for probably they had become such because they had been proved to be good? Such places are good to large classes of people, and offer desirable refreshment to both mind and body. With increased accommodations, they present increased attractions to the multitudinous public of our day. A regular army of pleasure-seekers now lines the paths of the Upper-street of Islington, and the terraces of Highbury, on most evenings; but on Sundays we may say of the Angel Inn, corner of Pentonville, what Dr. Johnson said of

Charing-cross, that "the full tide of human life flows there," and so it continues to flow until it reaches Highbury Barn, or the Sluice House by the banks of the New River, formerly and still called the Eel-pie House, but where eel-pies are now seldom obtainable. This kind of suburban retreat is a most agreeable relief to the close and confined air of a city life.

Thus we find Goldsmith, in his day, among the habitués of White Conduit House; and we have many pleasant stories of his doings there. Of these one forms the subject of a picture by Mr. A. Solomon, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851, and entitled *An Awkward Position*. It shows the poet seated in a tree-shaded arbour, with three young ladies; in the centre is a table, on which are spread a tea-service, wine, and fruit. Outside the arbour is a waiter in a wig, casting up the score on his fingers, while Goldsmith, with the bill in one hand, and the other deep in his breeches-pocket, wears a very stern discomposed face. In front we see an ornamental pond, and, beyond, two smart gentlemen advancing to the spot. The background is filled with gallant company, trees, and an orchestra, in which are a band and a lady vocalist. The fact thus represented is simple and ordinary enough. Goldsmith, strolling one day in the gardens, met three daughters of the family of a respectable tradesman to whom he was under some obligation. With his prompt disposition to oblige, he conducted them about the garden, treated them to tea, and ran up a bill without reflecting that he had no money in his pockets. He was, of course, perplexed, and so was the waiter; but just at the moment also came up some of his acquaintance whose good opinion he was desirous of conciliating. He could not, however, conceal his situation, and was for a while subject to their banter. Ultimately they enabled him to pay the waiter, and to convey off the ladies with flying colours.

The holiday shoemaker of the present day has to go further afield for his enjoyments, London having grown prodigiously. This expansion of the metropolis into the suburbs began with the year 1666, after the great fire of London. The houseless inhabitants fled for shelter into the suburbs, particularly to those on the north, and the extension of buildings became an inevitable necessity. "The marring of the City," says an old writer, "was the making of the suburbs." "Time was," says Rolle, in *The Burning of London Commemorated and Improved*, "that rich citizens would almost have held their noses if they had passed by those places where now it may be they are constrained to dwell." About ten years after this Clerkenwell had become a desirable place of residence. Numerous large gardens were interspersed among the houses, which were inhabited by nobility and gentry. In the northern parts of the parish were numerous small tenements, described as being in Islington, the rents of which varied from two pounds to ten pounds per annum. All these houses were built in direct contravention of the law, which prohibited "any new buildings of any houses

and tenements within three miles of any of the gates of the City of London." James the First had issued a royal proclamation containing these words: "Our Citie of London has become the greatest, or next greatest, citie of the Christian world; it is more than time that there be an utter cessation of new buildings;" adding, "this shall be the furthest and utmost period and end of them." The ordinance proved, however, inoperative. Charles the First also prohibited the erection of new buildings; but during the Commonwealth the erection of dwelling-houses in the suburbs rapidly advanced. Sir William Petty, in his *Political Arithmetic*, states that in 1682 London contained about six hundred and seventy thousand persons, and predicted that the growth of London would be at its greatest height in the year 1800, when its population would be eight times more than in 1682, or five million three hundred and sixty-nine thousand souls, and stop before 1842, when it would be double the former number, and the population be equal to that of the rest of England. Sir William Petty's prophecy has not come true; London has not yet attained a population of much more than half the number foretold.

The bugbear that frightened Sir William Petty still continued to disturb the peace of mind of divers grave men, who feared "the offshoots would impoverish the parent stock." In such cases a simile or some other figure serves better than an argument. Before a brick of Pentonville was laid, and while as yet there were in the vicinity pleasant pasture-lands, hedges, flower-gardens, and even corn-fields, it was proposed to make what was subsequently called the New-road the great boundary for restraining the ruinous practice of building on the north side of the town. An author in 1766 advises that "proper bounds may be set to that fury which possesses the fraternity of builders, by imposing severe penalties. If," he remarks, "they are permitted to proceed at their accustomed rate, we may expect to find the hills of Highgate and Hampstead a considerable part of the suburbs of London." All this was correctly predicted, but the evil involved in it has yet to appear. The increase has indeed been rapid.

Not far from the site of the old White Conduit House the artisan may now find the Agricultural Hall, and may occasionally explore it not only as a visitor but as a contributor to its attractions. The earnest and sincere worker here asserts the privilege of classing himself among men of taste who are deservedly the companions of artists. In a word, in this capacious building, originally intended and still used for the show of cattle, workmen themselves are now accustomed to exhibit the results of their leisure, the pet works of their choice, which, before or after the day's work is done, serve to relieve labour of its monotony by changing its form and object. The recent "Workmen's Festival" was rich in the variety of its materials. Merely amateur products of leisure hours, yet were they of high merit, nor few in number. Among them was the work of a veritable shoemaker.

who had taken out his holiday by exhibiting a cabinet-stand and case, veneered, by way of showing that he could do something besides making shoes, though in making them much fancy may be expended. Here, too, was a bootmaker, who treated us with a tin-pie and a glass shade. A boot-clicker exhibited, with some fancy leather-work, a case of picture-frames, vases, and flowers. Another bootmaker showed us some ornamental cabinet-work; and still another, a casket in walnut and tulip wood; and, lastly, another shoemaker contributed a manuscript book, entitled the *Flora of Shakespeare*, and also Specimens of the Present *Flora of Hampstead-heath*, scientifically arranged.

So much for the "Shoemakers' Holiday," so nobly furnished by "the Workmen's Festival." But other trades and employments found also their recreation in this Industrial Exhibition of the Working Classes. Ornamental work of all kinds, inventions without end, all manner of ingenious contrivances, have occupied the leisure hours of about a thousand persons who represent the labouring classes. We are glad to find that the late exhibition has been eminently successful. The hall was daily besieged with visitants, and fairly stood its ground against the Philharmonic and other music-halls with which the neighbourhood abounds. Nor has music been excluded from "the Workmen's Festival." Concerts and oratorios were repeatedly added to the exhibition of curiosities. Among them the *Messiah* was performed. The general administration of the Agricultural Hall, however, is not faultless. More than once it has been made the arena of low-class entertainments. Under proper management, it might be raised to a very high level. That general society is so raising itself has been abundantly proved by the lengthened existence within its walls of the "Metropolitan and Provincial Working Classes' Industrial Exhibition."

In such an exhibition we have tangible facts which testify to the working of moral and social laws that are yet struggling for recognition, though lying at the base of all the progress that excites the special admiration of the observer. The growing intelligence of the working classes is evidenced equally in the choice and elegance of their work. Their tendency to co-operation is likewise manifested by the collection of so many curiosities, the inventions of so many labourers, under one roof. In such union they show sources of strength which the ambitious will not be slow to utilise. But, in our observation of the body, let us not neglect the individuals that compose it, variously occupied as they are, and many of them suffering under "the iniquity of fortune." Too many are found in impoverished dwellings, too many inextricably complicated in social arrangements which militate against the exercise of taste or invention, and too many far removed from the means of intercourse with congenial minds by whom they might have been helped in their early trials. How many, for the want of a free interchange of ideas, have wasted years of patient study

and labour, and sacrificed health, in arriving by slow degrees at results which might otherwise have been attained with comparative facility? Among these are chemists, naturalists, geologists, botanists, mechanicians, sculptors, architects, who, under other names, have battled with their fates in homely abodes, amidst the roar of cities, and in the solitudes of nature. Records of such men are continually turning up in provincial journals, and in the minutes of local institutions. In the obscurest nooks in all our counties the local poet is sure to be found, "brooding like the stock-dove over his own sweet voice," and awaiting in hope the day when it may be heard by those who can appreciate its music. Because such men are always existing, though secluded for a while from observation, it is possible at any time that some grand intellect, some great inventive mind, some powerful orator, some attractive singer, may suddenly spring from the body of the people, from the midst of the industrial classes—heroic souls that have long struggled in darkness, upheld simply by a strong self-determination, and have at length found the daylight for which they yearned. To such the opportunities afforded by "Workmen's Festivals" are invaluable. They have none of the drawbacks to which the "Shoemakers' Holidays" of our fathers were liable.

KÄTCHEN'S CAPRICES.

IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

AT last the kitchen was cleared of all save the Kesters, Hans, and Ebner.

"Oh, Herr Ebner, what will they do to him?" asked Kätchen, in a pleading voice.

"Ah, Kätchen, Kätchen," said he, with a sad smile and a shake of the head, "ought I to care what they do to him?"

Kätchen blushed, but answered eagerly, "But you do care, Herr Ebner, because you're good and true, and can't endure that any one should suffer unjust suspicions. What can they do to him?"

"I don't rightly know how far he was responsible, but I suppose the owners will put a value on their property, and he will have to make good the loss."

"Oh, and it might be worth Heaven knows how many gulden! These foreigners are so rich. What will he do? What will he do?"

"Well, Kätchen, as to the value of the box, I can give you some good news; and indeed I came down to the Golden Lamb to-night partly to say something that I wouldn't say before the idle chattering folk who were here all agape for gossip. There's a man at my house who has come over from Ischl about this business. He is a courier in the service of the people who own the box, and is going with them to Vienna. A Swiss named—"

"Not Laurier?" interrupted Kester.

"Yes, truly; his name is Laurier," returned Ebner.

"Ah, I know him! He's a friend of mine," said Kester.

"Is he? Well, he seems to be a friend of Rosenheim's also. He says the poor fellow is terribly cut up, and vows he will sell everything he has in the world to make up the value of the stolen goods, rather than rest under any shade of suspicion, if they can't be traced. But, at any rate, Laurier thoroughly believes in Fritz's honesty."

"Yes, yes, yes; of course he does. He spent an evening with him here, in this very kitchen," said Josef, with a touch of importance in his manner, and omitting, with characteristic inaccuracy, to state that it was Fritz who had brought the courier to the Golden Lamb.

"But, Herr Ebner," said Kätchen, timidly, "please what is the good news about the value of the box?"

"The good news, Kätchen, is, that the box, which, it appears, was a dressing-case, contained only a few trinkets of trifling value, and a sum of money in napoleons—French gold coin, you know! The lady removed the rest of her jewels at the last moment, being unwilling to trust them out of her sight."

Then Ebner went on to explain that Laurier had left the travellers with whom he had journeyed as far as Salzburg, and had been engaged by the owners of the missing box to accompany them to Vienna. It had been his own proposition to come over to Gossau for a day and make inquiries.

"I fancy," said Ebner, "that he has got scent of something that may lead to discovery. But he's a shrewd close fellow, and keeps his tongue between his teeth; and it's as well to follow his example in this matter."

Caspar Ebner had seen enough of the landlord of the Golden Lamb to be quite aware that there was but one chance of ensuring Kester's being discreetly silent on any subject—namely, to keep him as ignorant of it as might be. Otherwise, it is possible Ebner could have been more communicative had he so chosen. Kätchen had been sitting silent and attentive. Suddenly, when Ebner, looking at his big silver watch, declared that it was time for him to go, she jumped up, and asked, anxiously, "Then how much do you think Fritz will have to pay, if the box is not found after all?"

"Tut, tut," said her father, testily; for he had been a little annoyed at the reserved tone which Ebner had assumed. "Women's curiosity is never satisfied. Do you think we are going to give you the particulars at full length, just that you may run all over Gossau to-morrow with your tongue going like a mill-clack? You'll know all that's needful for *you* to know in good time, my lass."

Under other circumstances, this speech would have elicited a tart retort, and possibly an unpleasant and unfilial display of temper; but now Kätchen only turned her large blue eyes on Ebner with an eager questioning gaze, and made no reply.

"I think we might venture to trust Mam'sell Kätchen with an answer to her question," said Ebner, quietly; "but as far as I am concerned,

it is impossible. I don't know the amount of the sum contained in the dressing-case."

Then he took his leave, and went away with a sorrowful conviction at his heart that Kätchen never would love him, and that she did love Fritz Rosenheim very dearly. And yet Ebner felt a glow of pleasure at the recollection of the way she had kissed his hand and praised his goodness, and he drew in his inmost mind that he had never before stood so high in Kätchen's estimation as he did that night.

"I've conquered her in one way, if I can't in another," thought he. "She'll never laugh at me again, at all events." Caspar Ebner had never admitted to himself the possibility of his love appearing ridiculous in Kätchen's eyes, so long as he retained any hope of winning her. But now he confessed that she *had* laughed at him; so I suppose he must have known it all along.

As to Kätchen, she went into her own little room, and, wrapping her cloak around her, sat down on the side of her bed, and meditated on many things. She sat quite still for more than an hour, until the oil in her lamp was nearly exhausted and the wick began to sputter. She roused herself with a start, and knitting her flaxen eyebrows sternly, said aloud, "I will. Yes; I will, I'm determined." Kätchen had evidently taken a great resolution. Then she lay down, and fell into a deep and childlike slumber.

The wintry sun was faintly struggling to pierce a heavy mass of snow-laden clouds, when, on the following morning, Laurier—who was up betimes—issued forth from the hostelry of the Black Eagle. The clue, whatever it was, which the courier had got as to the fate of the leather-covered box, led him to climb to a very considerable height among the pine-woods behind Gossau, and to spend the greater part of the forenoon in hanging about the saw-mills and watching a couple of charcoal-burners loading a miserable pony with canvas sacks. About one o'clock, Laurier went back to his inn to dinner, and then, having lighted his meerschaum, strolled leisurely down to Kester's house. The courier could afford to walk leisurely despite the keen air, for he was comfortably wrapped in a fur-lined coat, and wore a travelling-cap with side-flaps coming over his ears, and altogether looked very thoroughly protected from the inclemency of the season. But the protection served also in a great measure as a disguise; so that when Laurier entered the kitchen of the Golden Lamb, where Kester was sitting, the latter did not at once recognise his visitor, but stood up and saluted him as a stranger, with such measure of respect as appeared due to the fur-lined coat and the travelling-cap. Before making himself known to his host, Laurier glanced sharply round the large room, as though to assure himself that there was no other person present. Then he unfastened the flaps which nearly covered his face, threw open the heavy coat, and held out his hand to Kester with a friendly gesture. Old Josef was somewhat taken aback on recognising the courier, and put an extra touch of patronage into his greeting, to make up for the low bow

he had been cheated into giving him at first. But it was not long before they were seated side by side near the stove, each with a tall glass tankard of beer at his elbow; and the landlord prepared to enjoy a good gossip about the great event of the lost dressing-case. To a certain extent he was gratified. Laurier spoke fluently enough, for he possessed an art of which it may be presumed that Caspar Ebner was ignorant—namely, the power of talking copiously on any subject without telling any essential particular whatever respecting it. So that, though the conversation went briskly on, and Laurier never appeared to be exercising any caution in framing his answers, yet when Kester thought over it afterwards, he could not recall having learned one circumstance from the courier which had been unknown to him before. On the other hand, Laurier, by a series of well-directed questions, drew a good deal of information from Josef respecting the events of the morning on which Fritz Rosenheim had left Gossau for Ischl. When somewhat more than an hour had been passed in this way, and the two men were still alone in the kitchen, Laurier asked if he should not have the pleasure of seeing Mam'sell Katarine before he went away.

"Oh, Kätchen? Yes, surely, you shall see her if you will. I've hardly set eyes on her myself to-day," answered Kester, in a grumbling tone.

"I hope she's quite well," said Laurier.

"Well, yes, I suppose so. She came down this morning with her head muffled up in a black silk handkerchief after the Bohemian fashion. I asked if there was anything the matter, but she said no; she was only cold. Lord, what queer cattle these women creatures be! The ugly ones bedizen themselves with all manner of finery, whilst the pretty ones—well, they *mostly* bedizen themselves too!" said Josef, bringing his speech to an abrupt termination from inability to find an antithetical climax. "Kätchen!" he bawled, "Kätchen! Oh, now I think of it, she must be gone down to the wood-stack for fuel."

"Surely that's rather rough work for her at this time of year," said Laurier. "What's that strapping wench about that I saw here in the autumn?"

"Ah," rejoined the old man, "there's another of my plagues! That Liese is the most cross-grained, contrary creature! She can work for six, when she has a mind; but if she's as strong as a horse, she's as obstinate as a mule, and she has taken herself off, the Lord knows where."

"Taken herself off!" echoed Laurier, quickly.

"Yes; a message was sent down here, about a quarter of an hour before you came, from Heinrich Amsel's mother—Heinrich is Liese's sweetheart, more fool she—and the self-willed jade said she must have leave to go out for the afternoon, and, when I refused, she coolly went, whether I liked it or no."

Laurier was busy fastening on his cap by this time. "Well," said he, "I must be off too. I wish I had known before about——" He checked himself abruptly.

"About what?" asked Kester.

"Oh, nothing, nothing; only I must really be going now. There's a deal to do, and I've lost a good hour here already." And with a hurried shake of the hand the courier took leave of his host and left the kitchen, setting forth into the gathering shades of the early twilight with a quick resolute step.

Kester stood for a minute at the door watching him. "Not too civil, our friend the courier," grumbled the old man, with his pipe between his teeth. "Lost a good hour here, has he? Sappermint! And *my* time? I suppose he thinks that is of no value, because I sat so good-naturedly listening to his chat! Well, a landlord has a good deal to put up with in the way of business."

Then Josef returned to his beer and his tobacco, and fell asleep comfortably before the warm stove.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

As Laurier walked rapidly towards the Black Eagle, he thought over all the circumstances which had come to his knowledge relative to the missing box, and the result of his thinking was so thoroughly to confirm his preconceived suspicions, that he resolved to confide his view of the case, without loss of time, to Caspar Ebner, in order to consult with him as to what method had best be taken to bring the guilty parties to justice and clear Fritz's character; for that the dressing-case had been, not lost, but stolen, was to Laurier now no longer a matter of doubt. As he approached the inn, his eye lighted on the space of garden-ground in front of the house. Something he saw there appeared to startle him, for he stood still and peered straight before him, straining his gaze in the uncertain light. Almost as he stopped, a dark figure, crouching under the garden wall, moved and advanced a few steps so as to be well in Laurier's view. "Dear Heaven!" exclaimed he, "I was not mistaken, then! It is you, Mam'sell Kätchen."

"Hush!" said the girl, softly, with one cold red finger peeping forth from the folds of her cloak and raised warningly. "Hush! I want to speak to you, Herr Laurier. I've been waiting here for more than half an hour, because I didn't want any one else to know."

"What! waiting here? You must be frozen! Will you come into the great kitchen? There'll be a roaring fire there."

"No, no, thank you; but if you wouldn't mind going in first and opening the back door that leads into the stable-yard, I will come into the little parlour. We shall find nobody there at this hour, and I do so want to speak to you."

Laurier looked at her with a puzzled expression, but said he would do as she wished, and forthwith proceeded into the house, leaving her to take her way through the stable-yard. When he reached the back door and opened it, there stood Kätchen wrapped in her thick blue cloak, the hood of which was drawn over her head down to the eyebrows. Her round cheeks were pale, her little nose pinched with the cold, and her eyelids red and

swollen. And yet Laurier fancied, as he looked at her, that, in spite of the disadvantageous circumstances, there was a beauty in the childlike face which he had not seen there before. "Come in, mam'sell," said he, holding a light and leading the way into the parlour, "but I wish there was a bit of fire for you. It's mortal cold in here."

"I don't mind it," said Kätchen, as she entered the room and shut the door behind her. And then she stood opposite the courier, looking at him with a wistful timid face.

Laurier, who was a good-natured fellow, tried to help her to disclose the business on, which she had come, but she seemed unable to speak to him. Her lips moved and trembled but no sound came forth. "I see how it is," said he, "you're just petrified with the cold. Let me go and fetch you a bowl of hot coffee."

"No, no; pray don't!" she cried, with an effort at self-command. "I don't want any one to know I am here, and I am not cold. I—I will speak, indeed, in a moment." She put one hand on the lock of the door to stay him from opening it, and then, with her head partly turned away, said, tremulously, "Do you remember that night you were at our house, Herr Laurier, when father made me show you the length of my hair?"

"Remember it? To be sure I do! And how angry the Herr Landlord was when I talked of having it cut off for a wig! Ha, ha!"

"You said, that night," pursued Kätchen, with deepening colour and a nervous twitching of the hand which still rested on the handle of the door—"you said that you knew some one—that there was a friend of yours in Paris who—I mean you thought that he would—that he might, perhaps—buy it!"

The last words were brought out with a jerk, and her colour deepened and deepened, until her whole face was burning red.

"Buy it! Buy what, mam'sell? You don't mean—"

"Yes; I do. My hair. I mean to sell it if I can," said Kätchen, whose firmness seemed to return, now that the first plunge was over. "I should be so grateful to you, if you would try for me. I know I am asking a great, great favour; but I have no other way. And—and—I can't explain it, Herr Laurier, but when I thought of the way you spoke of your own daughter at home, somehow, that gave me courage to come and beg you to help me in this thing."

"My child," said Laurier, kindly, taking her hand, "you're right in thinking that I am willing to help you; but, as I am a father myself, you know, I must say that I shouldn't like my lass to shear off all her pretty locks for the sake of gaining money by 'em."

"It is not only for the sake of the money, indeed," cried the girl, eagerly.

"You'd best think of it well beforehand, at all events, Mam'sell Kätchen. Do nothing rashly."

"Ah, it is too late to warn me. I was afraid you might advise me not to do it, so—look."

She drew a bundle from under her cloak, and in so doing displaced the hood, which fell back, disclosing a little round flaxen head cropped quite closely, and evidently by inexperienced fingers. There was something at once ludicrous and touching in her aspect, as she stood there looking so baby-like and simple, and yet with a womanly light shining out of her blue eyes. Laurier gave a long whistle, and stood silent for a minute or two, staring at her.

"Well," said he, at last, "it's done, I see; and there's no use in crying over spilt milk. But I think it's a great pity. And now how much do you expect to get for all this?" As he spoke, he took up the rich coils of plaited hair which Kätchen had produced from beneath her cloak, and weighed them thoughtfully in his hand.

"Ah, that's just what I don't know, Herr Laurier. I want to get as much as ever I can."

"I suppose so," said the courier, dryly. It was evident that Kätchen's eagerness about the money revolted him a little.

"How much do you think, Herr Laurier, I shall get?" pursued Kätchen, unheeding of his altered manner.

"Well, I can really hardly tell, to a kreuzer," returned Laurier. "I'm sorry if anything I said has induced you to do this, for I fear I may have raised false hopes, and you may happen to be disappointed."

Kätchen's face fell. "Could you guess anywhere near the sum, please, Herr Laurier?" said she, with a trembling lip.

"Well, perhaps—mind, I can't be answerable to a fraction—I say perhaps, if I got my friend in Paris to buy it, he might go as high as a hundred and fifty or two hundred francs. That's a fancy price for the raw material; but then the hair is something out of the common."

"Oh, thank you, thank you. Two hundred francs is a great deal of money, isn't it?"

"It all depends, mam'sell. It's a good deal to some people, and very little to others. But it's a great pity, as I said before, that you should have been in such a hurry, for I shan't have an opportunity of seeing my friend at Paris before next spring at soonest; and you might have kept your pretty yellow locks on your head all the time between this and then."

"Herr Laurier," said Kätchen, after an instant's hesitation, "I thought of that too. I hope you won't have a bad opinion of me for what I'm going to ask. You wouldn't, I believe, if you knew all. Can you—will you let me have the money? I don't care if you give me a little less than you think the hair may be worth, only pray do let me have the money now at once! I cut off my hair before I came," she added, naively, "because I fancied, if you saw it was done and couldn't be undone, you might be more likely to consent to buy it."

Laurier was completely puzzled. There was a single-minded, simple earnestness in the girl's manner, which seemed incompatible with mere selfish greed of gain. As he looked attentively in her face, a light seemed all at once to dawn on him which made him instantly soften his manner.

"My good child," said he, "I'm not at all sure that I *can* do what you wish. It is possible that I might manage to advance a hundred francs or so; but I am not a rich milord, Mam'sell Kätchen, who has but to put his hand in his pocket and bring it out full of gold napoleons. I work hard, and have others to think of, besides myself. Look here. If you will go and sit by the fire in the billiard-room—there isn't a soul there, I'll answer for it—I'll just think over how my money matters stand and give you an answer. I won't keep you long."

Kätchen suffered him to take her cold hand, and lead her along the stone passage until they reached the door of the billiard-room. It was empty, as he had promised, and he placed her by the stove, and was about to leave her, when she called him back.

"Herr Laurier, Herr Laurier! You won't tell anybody," said she, gravely, "because it is a secret."

"Oh, as to that, Mam'sell Katarina," returned the courier with a queer glance over his shoulder as he left the room, "make your mind easy."

But nevertheless he betook himself forthwith to Caspar Ebner's private apartment, and remained closeted with the landlord for some time. Meanwhile, Kätchen sat by the stove in the great bare billiard-room, enjoying the warmth in a half-unconscious way. She had let the hood—which she had drawn up on leaving the little parlour—slip back from her head, and every now and then she passed her hand softly over the short silky hair, as though to assure herself that the long luxuriant tresses were really gone. She had sat musing and almost dozing for nearly three-quarters of an hour, when Laurier returned, and, walking straight up to her, put a roll of very dirty Austrian bank-notes into her hand.

"Oh, Herr Laurier," exclaimed Kätchen, looking nervously at the little parcel, "is this—?"

"Yes, mam'sell; the price of these," answered Laurier, as he held out the long thick plaits of hair at arm's length. "I have made an exact calculation, and I find I can afford to give the full price I named. There's eighty-five gulden in that roll."

Kätchen's face beamed with joy, although her eyes were brimming over with tears. She caught Laurier's hand, and pressed it between both hers. Suddenly a shadow passed over the childlike joy which lit up her countenance.

"I hope," said she, anxiously—"I do hope you are not doing this merely out of kindness and generosity. You won't be a loser by your goodness, will you?"

"No, no, my little maiden," answered the courier, "no fear of that. I am quite safe. And listen, Kätchen; I beg you not to be grateful to me in the matter; because—because it hurts me. And now, child, I must see you safely within your own home. It is pitch dark outside, and I can't let you go alone."

But Kätchen protested she felt no fear, and needed no escort, and, before Laurier could re-

monstrate, she had pulled her hood over her head, and run out of the room, and out of the house, leaving him with the soft mass of glistening yellow plaits in his hand.

The next day all Gossau was ringing with the news that the officers of justice had been making perquisitions in the Amsels' cottage up in the pine-woods behind the village, and that old Lotte, Heinrich Amsel's mother, had been arrested. All sorts of stories were flying about. Some said that a band of robbers had been discovered, who had their head-quarters at the saw-mills. Others declared that Heinrich Amsel had singly performed exploits which surpassed the most desperate deeds of Schinderhannes. But, as the afternoon wore on, something like a consistent story was currently accepted. It was known that Liese, Kester's servant, was in custody as well as the old woman. Heinrich Amsel had disappeared from Gossau, and gone no one knew whither; but search was being diligently made for him. The excitement was intense, and the Golden Lamb once more became the focus of interest and news. Again and again did Kester, speaking as one who had private and mysterious means of information, relate to eager listeners the circumstantial evidence which appeared to inculpate the Amsels. And, as the customers' thirst for beer was in accurate proportion to the keenness of their curiosity, the landlord of the Golden Lamb was in a high state of fuss and satisfaction. It was, perhaps, well for Kätchen that his attention should have been thus occupied just at this time, for it diverted his mind from the consideration of what he termed her undutiful behaviour. There had been a stormy scene between father and daughter, when, at last, Josef had discovered the fact of Kätchen's shorn locks. He had gone into one of his unmanageable fits of rage—which were, fortunately, as brief as they were violent—and had stormed incoherently for ten minutes. But then, curiosity getting the better of anger, he had insisted on learning the reason of this sacrifice on Kätchen's part. When, after much hesitation and with many tears and blushes, Kätchen confessed that she had sold her beautiful hair in order to help Fritz Rosenheim to make up the value of the lost dressing-case, Josef Kester was stricken dumb with amazement. He sank down in the great chair, and stared at his daughter for some minutes in profound silence. At last, leaning his head back and folding his arms with an air of superhuman calmness and resignation, he said, slowly:

"No, no; I can't call it anything else but madness. The girl's just mad with the spirit of contradiction. It's like my luck. I oughtn't to be surprised. There's not a man in all fatherland who's had such troubles to bear as I have."

"Oh, father," murmured Kätchen, with tearful eyes, "don't say so! I know I have often been undutiful and self-willed, but I mean to try to be better; and if you will only forgive me, I will be a good child to you, indeed I will."

Kester closed his eyes to intensify the expression of resignation he had thrown into his countenance, and repeated, nodding his head gently up and down, "Mad with the spirit of contradiction. I can't call it anything else but madness. Look at the case. Here's a girl carrying on all manner of moonshine with a young fellow who's not worth a kreuzer in the world. I say nothing against him, but he's as poor as Job. Her father objects to the moonshine, and exerts himself to find her a husband worth having in every respect. The man is found, comes forward in a thoroughly satisfactory way, and offers to the girl. The girl tells her anxious father, of her own free will, that she will accept the offer—an offer, mind you, which any other lass in Gossau, or for twenty leagues about, would go down on her knees and thank Heaven for—and then, in the next breath, turns round and declares she can never, never consent to marry him. Her father is naturally angry and disappointed, but, being a fond parent, is beginning to forgive her, and even to be reconciled to the idea of letting her choose for herself, when—piff, paff!—one fine day she informs him that she has quarrelled desperately with lover number one, that she can on no account be induced to think of him any more, and has sent him packing in the footsteps of lover number two. This is another trial to a father's feelings, but it isn't the worst yet. No sooner does lover number one, who has hitherto borne a high character, get into a scrape—no sooner, in short, does he lie under suspicion of theft and breach of trust—than my fräulein, who professed before not to care a snap of the finger for him, coolly cuts off her beautiful hair, that there isn't the like of in the district, and sends him the price of it to help pay his forfeit! I tell you what, my wench, you've only made one mistake after all. Instead of shearing your head, you ought to have shaved it!" Kester had talked himself almost into a good humour by this time, and repeated, complacently, with his eyes still shut and his head thrown back, "Shaved it. Yes, that's what you ought to have done."

Käthen took all this with unwonted meekness, and busied herself silently in attending to the household duties, which fell heavily on her shoulders in the absence of Liese. But what helped her to be patient, and even cheerful, was the hope, almost amounting to certainty, that now Fritz's character would come out spotless from the investigations which were being made. "Not," said Käthen to herself—"not that any one who knows him could ever suspect him of a dishonest action, but I want all the world to be convinced that his conscience is as clear in this matter as the sun at noonday."

The course of justice is proverbially tardy, and she puts on no special shoes of swiftness in the Austrian empire. It was therefore a long time before the legal proceedings necessitated by Laurier's accusation against Liese and the Amsels resulted in the disclosure of any important facts. The strongest circumstance

against Heinrich Amsel was the discovery of some fragments of a box, with a broken lock adhering to them, hidden under a heap of pine-chips in the saw-mills. The lock had evidently resisted the clumsy attempts made to pick it, and the box had been smashed to pieces with some blunt instrument. A broken woodman's axe was found near the fragments, but could not be proved to have belonged to Heinrich Amsel. As regards this man, it may as well be stated at once that he was traced as far as Hamburg, where it was supposed he got on board an emigrant ship bound for the United States, the sum of ready money contained in the dressing-case having doubtless facilitated his escape. The two women, Lotte and Liese, though more than suspected of complicity in the robbery, were finally released, it having been found impossible to elicit any evidence which should amount to legal proof of their guilt. Liese persisted, with dogged obstinacy, in denying all knowledge of the loosened cord, which she was strongly suspected to have purposely untied when packing the boxes on the cart. She also aroused much popular indignation by throwing out stupidly malevolent hints that Fritz Rosenheim, and he alone, was the culprit. As soon as she was set at liberty, she went away, no one knew whither, with old Lotte Amsel. Some conjectured that they had gone to join Heinrich in America; others supposed them to have made their way to Vienna, where Liese had relatives, not of the most reputable character. However that may have been, it is certain that they disappeared from Gossau, and were heard of there no more.

Fritz Rosenheim's conduct in the affair had won the warm approbation of the owners of the ~~lost~~ dressing-case. And as soon as the circumstances brought to light on the trial were made known to them, they not only restored to Fritz the sum he had insisted on paying to them as the first instalment of the full value of their property, but made him a handsome present into the bargain. But all this, even the preservation of his good name, which was dear to Fritz's honest pride, gave him not one half the joy that filled his heart on learning, as he did from Laurier, the name of the anonymous friend who had forwarded him two hundred francs in Austrian notes.

"I couldn't for the life of me puzzle out who it could be," said he, "but at last I guessed it might possibly be Herr Ebner. He was always very kind to me, and I knew him to be a good charitable man. Still, of course, I thought it strange. And I resolved to ask him point blank. Because, of course, I meant to scrape and strive to pay it all back, some day. But to think of it's being my Käthen! The darling! And her pretty precious golden hair that was worth more than all the money that ever was coined—just to think of the little angel cutting it all off for my sake! There never was anybody in the world like her, and I feel as if I wasn't worthy to fasten her shoe-tie."

However, for as modest as he was, Fritz in course of time screwed up his courage to the

point of resolving once more to ask this angel to share his earthly lot. The first meeting between the lovers since that gloomy parting in the grey autumn morning was a somewhat constrained one; Kätchen was shy and silent, Fritz timid and anxious. He hesitated for a choice form of words in which to tell her that he knew of the sacrifice she had made for his sake, and was filled with gratitude for it. And at last, after long deliberation and painful mental framing of a fitting speech, he suddenly fell down on his knees before her, and, taking her hands in his, blurted out: "Oh, Kätchen, how good it was of you, and how I love you!"

And I really believe that Kätchen found those few words quite as eloquent as anything else he could possibly have said.

"I am very angry," she whispered; but she didn't look so. "Herr Laurier is a traitor; he ought not to have told you."

"Not told me!" echoed Fritz, rising up, but still keeping the little hands in his. "I shall be grateful to him to my dying day for telling me. And, I say, Kätchen, you ain't really sorry in your heart that he did tell me, are you? Because, if it hadn't been for that, I should never again have plucked up courage to—to—"

The speech was never finished; but perhaps Fritz meant he should not have had courage to take Kätchen in his arms and kiss her. That, at all events, is what he assuredly did.

Old Kester's consent to his daughter's marriage with Fritz Rosenheim was obtained without much difficulty. He was thankful, he said, that she had made up her mind at last; though he persisted in asserting that until he saw Kätchen come out of the church a wedded wife, all due forms and ceremonies having been complied with, he should never feel secure that she would not disappoint every one's expectations by some new caprice.

"As long as there was the least chance of your being suspected of robbery, my boy," said the old man to his future son-in-law, "you were right enough with Kätchen. But now that the world agrees to acknowledge you an honest man, why you'd best look sharp after her, that's all!"

But he accepted the new state of things very well, on the whole; and allowed all trouble and toil about the inn to slip from his own hands into Fritz's with much complaisance. Caspar Ebner, when he heard that Kätchen's wedding-day was fixed, discovered that about that period business would call him away from Gossau for some weeks. He did not come to take leave of Kätchen in person, but wrote her a kind little note, and sent with it a box which he wished should not be opened until her marriage morning. It contained, he said, a nuptial wreath and veil, and he begged she would accept and wear them for his sake. When, on the morning of her wedding-day, Kätchen opened this box, she found in it a pretty gold cross and chain for the neck, and underneath, covered with a white veil,

a thick plaited coronet made of glistening yellow hair. There was also a slip of paper with these words written on it: "A golden marriage crown for Kätchen." The bride's blue eyes brimmed over with tears as she looked at it.

"My hair!" she exclaimed. "Then it was he who—How good he is! How good everybody has been, except me! But now I mean to try to be good, for Fritz's sake." And she knelt down to say one last prayer by her little bed, with a heart very full of gratitude and humility. Kätchen wore the wreath of hair as her bridal head-gear; and though many Gossau people thought a gilt paper tiara covered with ornaments would have been more becoming, yet Fitz then and always declared that no wife had ever worn so beautiful and honourable a marriage crown as his Kätchen.

The Golden Lamb, freshly gilt and painted, showed his meek face with a new and pleasant expression on the signboard. So meek and pleasant was his altered aspect, that one might almost have said he smiled. The young couple took up their abode at the old inn, and by energy, thrift, and cheerful civility, so extended its trade, that by-and-by Fritz had to relinquish his carriage and team of horses and devote himself to the business of a landlord. Old Kester was very proud and happy when his first grandchild was put into his arms; but the little idol—who was in due time succeeded by sundry brothers and sisters—had no such faithful adorer as Caspar Ebner. He was her godfather and chose her name. They suggested that the child should be called Katarina, after her mother; but he said no, he liked better the name of Margarethe, and so she was called. He often told her the story of her mother's wedding crown; and used to say, looking into the child's clear eyes, and stroking her plump fresh cheeks:

"Ay, my little maid, you've a sweet face, and a pleasant; but you'll never be so pretty as your mother. No, no, there is but one Kätchen, and there never can be another."

And I suppose he was sincere in saying so, for he remained a bachelor to the end of his days. Fritz and his wife lived together in faithful and fond companionship; and, notwithstanding old Josef's predictions, the sacrifice of her beautiful hair was the very last of Kätchen's caprices.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD,"
&c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER II. MRS. P. IRETON BEMBRIDGE.

THE experiment which Dr. Merle had sanctioned proved successful. The wise physician had calmed the apprehensions with which her husband and son regarded the swoon into which Mrs. Carruthers had fallen upon recognising George, and had hinted that on her recovery the mother and son should be left alone.

"The old gentleman," said Dr. Merle to Mr. Felton, "and a fine old gentleman he is—a little peculiar, but it would not do the world any harm to have a few more of his sort in it—has told me a good deal of the family history intentionally, and some of it unintentionally, and I have not the least doubt that the root of Mrs. Carruthers's disease is simply her son."

"He has given her some trouble, I know," said Mark Felton, with a sigh; "but hardly so much as that comes to, I fancy."

"Well, well, I won't be positive; but I think so. No young man ever tells all the truth about his follies; and, indeed, no middle-aged or old man, for that matter; and rely upon it, his mother knows more than any one else. She will do well, Mr. Felton. She sees him all right, no matter how wrong he may have been; there's nothing gravely amiss now. We may leave her to time now, and her son's society."

"Do you think I may venture to see her soon?"

"Impossible to say, for a day or two, my dear sir, impossible to say. Mr. Carruthers and Mr. Dallas must explain your coming to her. I don't prescribe *two* shocks, you know, even pleasant ones, and then I have no doubt you will perfect the cure."

Mr. Felton acknowledged the smooth speech with an absent sort of smile, and Dr. Merle took his leave.

"You are sure there is nothing wrong with you, George? You are quite sure you are in no danger?" said Mrs. Carruthers, late in the afternoon of that day, to her son, as she lay quietly on a large sofa, drawn close to the window, where the panes were glittering in the dying light. Her face was turned towards him,

her dark eyes a little troubled, and not so bright as they had been, resting fondly and with a puzzled expression upon his face, and one thin hand fondly clasped in his. George was lying on the floor beside her sofa, his head resting against her pillow, and the fingers of her other hand were moving softly among his rich brown curls.

"Nothing, indeed, mother. All is well with me—much, much better than I ever expected or hoped; but you must not agitate yourself, or ask any questions. Dr. Merle and Mr. Carruthers have put me on my honour not to talk to you of the past, and we must keep our word, you know," and the young man tenderly kissed the hand he held in his.

"Yes, yes," she said, in an absent, searching tone, "but there is something—there was something—I—"

"Hush, mother! In the time to come you shall know everything, but for the present you must simply trust me. Indeed, there is nothing wrong. I am here with you, brought here and welcomed by Mr. Carruthers. You remember that he did not like me, and he had good cause; yes, he had good cause, but that is all over now. I am here with his full sanction and approbation, and you must be content to know that, to feel it, and *to rest*. You have to get strong and well now, mother, and then we shall all be quite happy."

"Yes, George, yes. I can rest now," said his mother. And she nestled down upon her sofa, and he drew the coverings around her, and they both kept silence; and presently, in the autumnal evening, when the moon rose over the dark Taunus, and the lights began to sparkle all over the little white town, Mrs. Carruthers fell asleep, with her hand clasped in that of her son, and her worn but always handsome face resting against his brown curls.

The days went by, and with the lapse of each Mrs. Carruthers made an advance towards the recovery of her health and her faculties. Very shortly after their meeting, George had spoken to her of his uncle, and though he found it difficult to fix her attention or engage her interest, he succeeded in ascertaining that she remembered all the circumstances of her brother's life, and that he had expressed a wish and intention to come to England.

"Mark is not happy in his son," she said one day to Mr. Carruthers and George, who had

been talking to her by preconcerted arrangement on the subject. "I fear he has given him a great deal of trouble. I remember in many of his letters he said he was not blest, like me, with a son of whom he could be proud."

George reddened violently as his mother's harmless words showed him how she had concealed all her grief from her brother, and struck him with sudden shame and confusion in his step-father's presence. Mr. Carruthers felt inexpressibly confused also, and as readiness was not the Grand Lama's forte, he blundered out:

"Well, my dear, never mind about his son. You would be glad to see your brother Mark, wouldn't you?"

Mrs. Carruthers looked earnestly at him as she raised herself from her pillows, and the faint colour in her cheek deepened into a dark flush as she said:

"Glad to see my brother Mark! Indeed I should be. Is he here too?"

So, after long years, the brother and sister met again, and Mark Felton was a little diverted from his anxiety about his son by the interest and affection with which his sister inspired him, and the strong hold which George Dallas gained upon the affections of a man who had been sorely wounded in his own hopes and expectations. He was not under any mistaken impression about his nephew. He knew that George had caused his mother the deepest grief, and had for a long time gone as wrong as a young man could go short of entering on a criminal career. But he divided the good from the evil in his character, he discerned something of the noble and the generous in the young man, and if he laid too much to the account of circumstances, and handled his follies too tenderly, it was because he had himself suffered from all the grief which profligacy, combined with cold and calculating meanness, can inflict upon a parent's heart.

George Dallas yielded easily to the influence of happiness. His gay and pleasant manner was full of fascination, and of a certain easy grace which had peculiar charms for his Transatlantic uncle; and his love for his mother was a constant pleasure to her brother to witness, and an irresistible testimony to the unspoiled nature of the son. True, this affection had not availed to restrain him formerly, but the partial uncle argued that circumstances had been against the boy, and that he had not had fair play. It was not very sound reasoning, but there was nothing to contradict it just at present, and Mr. Felton was content to feel rather than to reason.

Mr. and Mrs. Routh had arrived at Homburg immediately after Mr. Felton and George had reached that place of fashionable resort. Their lodgings were in a more central situation than those of Mr. and Mrs. Carruthers, and were within easy reach of all the means of diversion which the wicked little resort of the designing and their dupes commanded. George Dallas did not see much of Routh. He had been dis-

turbed and impressed by Mr. Felton's exceedingly emphatic expression of opinion respecting that gentleman; he had been filled with a vague regret, for which now and then he took himself to task, as ungrateful and whimsical, for having renewed his intimacy with Routh. His levity, his callousness, respecting the dreadful event concerning which he had consulted him, had shocked George at the time, and his sense of them had grown with every hour's consideration of the matter, and they were many, in which he had since engaged. Nothing had occurred to him to reverse or weaken the force of Routh's opinion; but he could not get over his heartlessness. They met, indeed, frequently. They met when George and his uncle, or his step-father, or both, walked about the town and its environs, or in the gardens; they met when George strolled about the salons of the Kursaal, religiously abstaining from play; it was strange how the taste for it had passed away from him, and how little he suffered, even at first, in establishing the rule of self-restraint; but they rarely met in private, and they had not had half an hour's conversation in the week which had now elapsed since Routh and Harriet had arrived at Homburg.

But George had seen Harriet daily. Every afternoon he escorted his mother during her drive, and then he called on Mrs. Routh. His visits tortured her, and yet they pleased her too. Above all, there was security in them. She should know everything he was doing; she should be quite sure no other influence, stronger, dangerous, was at work, while he came to her daily, and talked to her in the old frank way. Routh shrank from seeing him, as Harriet well knew, and felt, also, that there was security in his visits to her. "He will keep out of George's way, of course," she said to herself, when she acquiesced in the expediency of following Dallas to Homburg, and the necessity for keeping him strictly in sight, for some time at least. "He will not undertake the daily torture. No; that, too, must be my share. Well, I am tied to the stake, and there is no escape; only an interval of slumber now and then, more or less rare and brief. I don't want to tie him to it also—he could not bear it as I can."

And she bore it well—wonderfully well, on the whole, though the simile of bodily torture is not overdrawn as representing what she endured. By a sort of tacit mutual consent, they never alluded to Deane or the discovery of the murder. George, who never could bear the sight of a woman's suffering, had a vivid recollection of the terrible emotion she had undergone when he disclosed the truth to her, and determined to avoid the subject for the future. She understood this, but she felt tolerably certain that if any new complication arose, if any occasion of doubt or hesitation presented itself, George would seek her advice. She should not be kept in ignorance, and that was enough. She had ascertained, before they left London, that George had not mentioned the matter to Mr.

Felton, and when the young man told her how otherwise complete his explanation with Mr. Felton had been, she felt a degree of satisfaction in the proof of her power and influence afforded by this reticence.

The positive injunction which Mr. Felton had laid upon his nephew aided George's sensitiveness with respect to Harriet. He felt convinced that if his uncle had known her, as he knew her, he would have been satisfied to confide to her the trouble and anxiety under which he laboured, and whose origin was assuming, to George's mind, increasing seriousness with every day which passed by, without bringing news of Mr. Felton's son. But he would not, however he might find relief and counsel by doing so, discuss with Harriet a matter which he had been positively forbidden to discuss with her husband: he could not ask her secrecy without hurting her by an explanation of Mr. Felton's ill opinion of Routh. So it happened that these two persons met every day, and that much liking, confidence, and esteem existed on the man's part towards the woman, and yet unbroken silence was maintained on the subject which deeply engaged the minds of both. Philip Deane's name was never mentioned by Harriet, nor did Dallas speak of Arthur Felton.

So Mrs. Carruthers improved in health. Mr. Carruthers was very gracious and affable to his step-son, and terribly nervous and anxious about his wife, on whom, if the worthy physician could have been brought to consent, he would have kept Dr. Merle in perpetual attendance, being incapable of recognising the importance—indeed, almost the existence—of any patient of that gentleman's, except Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings. Mr. Felton heard nothing of his son, and waited, frequently discussing the subject with Mr. Carruthers and his nephew; and the bright sweet autumn days went on. Afterwards, when George reviewed their course and pondered on the strange and wayward ways through which his life had lain, he thought of the tranquillity, the lull, there had been in that time, with wonder.

The change of scene, the physical effort, a certain inevitable deadening effect produced by the lapse of time, more powerful in cases of extreme excitement than its space would seem to warrant, had had their effect on Harriet's spirits and appearance. She looked more like herself, George thought, when he came to make her his daily visit. Perhaps he had become more accustomed to the change he had noted with her solicitude on his return to London; she was certainly more cheerful. He did not take account of the fact that he did not see her in Routh's company, though his uncle's comment on her husband's feelings towards her frequently and painfully recurred to him. Harriet questioned him frequently about his mother, and George, full of gratitude for her kindness and sympathy, spoke freely of her, of his uncle, of the altered position in which he stood with his step-father, and of his improved condition and

hopes. There were only two persons of interest to him whom he did not mention to Harriet. They were Austin Felton and Clare Carruthers.

"Have you ever been to the Bursaal in the evening?" he asked Harriet one day, as they were talking, and looking at the groups of gaily dressed men and women lounging past the window where they were seated.

"Yes, I have gone in there once or twice with Stewart; but I got tired of it very soon, and I don't want to go again."

"My uncle met an old acquaintance there last evening," George went on; "he does not particularly care about it either; but we were strolling about the gardens until rather late, and then we went in and had a look at the ball-room. I had been watching a lady for some time, out-and-out the best dancer in the room, when she came up to my uncle and spoke to him, and I find out she is quite a celebrity here."

"Indeed," said Harriet, not vehemently interested.

"Yes, quite," said George; "and, judging by what my uncle says, I should think she was a celebrity in New York too. I should like to show her to you, Mrs. Routh; she is like one of those impossible women in the American woods, with clusters of currants made in carbuncles, and bunches of cherries, in flawless rubies, in their hair—you know the kind of thing I mean. I fancy the Phoenix would look shy about ensuring her wardrobe, and Hancock feel dubious about matching her diamonds. Such a twinkling, flashing, glittering, coaxing, flippant mortal I never met in my life. I wonder if she dresses as gorgeously under the sunshine as under the gas."

"She has quite taken your fancy, George. Did Mr. Felton introduce you?"

"Yes. There she stood, looking up in his face, but I am quite sure seeing me and every other person in the room at the same time, and chattering like a Yankee magpie; so my uncle presented me to—Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge, as he called her, in American fashion. She was there, with a whole host of people, and I didn't fancy them, 'ke-inder didn't,' as she would say, no doubt, and went away as soon as I could."

"Is she a widow?"

"Yes—at least, I think so; I heard nothing of P. Ireton."

"She will be cultivating your uncle, or yourself, George. A handsome, rich young widow, and an old acquaintance of your uncle's, eh?"

"I don't feel in the least like it, Mrs. Routh, and I am sure the sparkling, flashing, dashing lady I met last night would fly at no such mean quarry. I have rather a notion, too, that my uncle does not like her."

"Have you? Did he seem displeased at the meeting?"

"Not exactly displeased—but—I am beginning to understand him now wonderfully well, and in some things he is so like my mother. Now, with her I can always feel whether she

likes a person or not without her saying a word—I could formerly, I mean, when she was more susceptible to impressions than she is now. It's just the same in my uncle's case; and I know, in a minute, he didn't like Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge."

"Where is she staying? At the 'Quatre Saisons,' I suppose?"

"No," said George; "she has one of the Schwazchild houses. You know them, Mrs. Routh?"

"Yes, I know them," said Harriet. "I saw the Frau Schwazchild yesterday, rejoicing in a pink parasol with a coral handle, set with turquoises in clumps."

"That's the woman. Shouldn't wonder if the parasol were a waif from the wardrobe of Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge. She has, then, one of those huge houses for herself and her attendants."

"Did she tell you all this in the ball-room?"

"All *this*? Bless your innocence, she got through such trivialities as these in about two minutes. I might have heard her whole history, and P. Ireton's, no doubt, particulars of his last illness—if he had a last illness—included, if I had asked her to dance. And, by Jove!" said George, starting up and pushing back the muslin curtain which impeded Harriet's view of the street somewhat, "there she is, coming down the street in a pony-carriage, and looking like a whole triumphal procession on one set of wheels."

Harriet looked out with an assumption of more curiosity than she felt. In a low, elegant, but rather over-ornamented equipage, drawn by two grey ponies, likewise rather over-ornamented, but very handsome and of great value, sat a lady of beauty as undeniable as that of her horses, and elegance as striking as that of her carriage. Woman like, Harriet remarked the magnificence of her dress before she noticed the beauty of her face, set off as it was by the aid of the most perfect hat and feather ever put together by the milliner's art. That beauty was at once of the correct and the sparkling order. Her features were of statuesque regularity, but they had all the piquant brilliancy of rich, glowing, passionate life. Cheeks and lips flushed with the full colour of health, masses of hair of the darkest, glossiest brown coiled up in endless braids and rolls under the inimitable hat; eyes so dark that to call them black was a venial exaggeration; teeth which shone like jewels; and in the face, the air, over the whole person and equipment of the woman, from the wrists outstretched over the reins she held, and on which broad bands of jewels flashed, to the tip of the satin boot which protruded beneath the silken carriage-wrap spread daintily over her knees, an intolerable consciousness and domineering boldness which was simply odious. Her ponies were stepping leisurely; her glittering eyes were looking right and left, as though she were searching for some one among the scattered groups she passed, and every member of which stared at her without disguise. As much of

her dress as could be seen was a magnificent mixture of satin and lace and jewels, and even in her dress there was a daring, reckless something, indefinable but distinct, which made the gazers feel that in staring at her there was no offence.

"Stunning, isn't she, Mrs. Routh? I beg your pardon for the slang, but there is really no other word. Blinding, dazzling, and all the rest of it."

"Stunning, certainly, George," said Harriet, smiling; "but, somehow, I don't think you care particularly to be stunned."

"Not in the least. She is not a bit my style," and George, thinking of what "his" style was, and how widely it differed from the triumphant figure in the ornate carriage out there, let the muslin curtain drop, and turned away from the window. Harriet sat down and took up her work.

"A woman whom men would love for a little while, and hate bitterly after, I fancy; but whom women would hate at once, and always."

Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge had not found among the loungers in the town the individual whom her bright black eyes were seeking, when George Dallas and Harriet Routh had marked her from the window. She had driven rapidly away past the gardens and the Schloss, and when fully two miles outside the town she overtook a gentleman sauntering leisurely along, with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and his moody eyes fixed upon the ground. The carriage was close upon him before he looked round, though the sound made by the wheels and the trotting horses had been distinct in the clear air, as they came along the empty road. Then he turned and greeted the lady with effusion. In a moment he had taken his place beside her, and was whirled away into the green and golden distance of the forest, under the brow crest of Taunus.

"How very odd that you should know him," said the gorgeous lady of the pony-carriage to the gentleman seated beside her, as she walked her ponies along a shady road, where the slim trees stood on guard on either side, and the fallen leaves rustled under the wheels.

"Not so very odd. He is a near relative of one of my most intimate friends."

"Ah, his nephew, I suppose you mean, a tall young man with good eyes, and a remarkably rich expression of countenance."

"I recognise the description certainly, and it is not flattering. That is the individual; his name is Dallas."

"A booby, I'm convinced. How he can be an intimate friend of yours I cannot understand." She said this rather sulkily, which, by adding to its character of sincerity, made the indirect flattery in which she was a proficient all the more delicious. Her companion's eyes flashed with pleasure as he turned them upon her with a look which she did not raise her eyes to receive, but which dyed her cheek a deeper rose tint than before. Then she went on:

"He is come here with Mr. Felton to meet his cousin, I suppose. Arthur Felton will not like that, I fancy. He regarded this fine family reunion as a very decided nuisance, I can assure you."

"I don't quite understand you," her companion said. "Mr. Felton's son is not here, that I know of; he certainly had not arrived yesterday, for Dallas was at my lodgings, and would have been sure to mention it."

"No," replied the lady, with a slow, provoking smile, which lighted her eyes up with mischief, and showed more of her faultless teeth than always glistened on the world. "I know he is not here, but he is coming. I gave him a rendezvous here for this very week, in Paris, last March."

The gentleman looked at her in such extreme surprise, that it quite amused her. She did not only smile now, she laughed.

"I will explain my meaning," she said, "in very few words. I have known the Feltons all my life, and Arthur has been more or less in love with me since he was a boy; rather less than more, perhaps, for that's his way, and not at all to the detriment of his being quite as much in love with any number of women besides. He and his father never got on well. Mr. Felton did not like 'his ways' as the goodies and gossips say, and, in particular, he did not like his being in love with me, for he can't bear me. Frightfully bad taste, isn't it? Get along, President," this to one of the ponies, as she touched him up with her whip; "you've had walking enough. Awfully bad taste—thank you, you needn't say yes; you're looking unutterable things. Of course I don't mind that particularly, and I don't care for Arthur Felton in the ve-ry least," with a most enchanting drawl and the faintest pout of the crimson lips. "He made himself a perfect nuisance in Paris, and I really must have quarrelled with him, if I had not gone away with some friends, who wouldn't have Arthur—no, not in the ve-ry least," and she repeated the before-mentioned little performance quite enchantingly.

"But you agreed to meet him here?" said her companion, very moodily.

"Agreed to meet him here! How ridiculous you are. I gave him rendezvous, which I beg to observe is not precisely the same thing as agreeing to meet him."

"Sounds like it," said the gentleman, still more sulkily.

"Very true; but it isn't. I meant to come here—I always lay my plans long beforehand—just at this time, and I thought I might as well let him come here as have him constantly teasing me in the mean time. It was a long while off, remember." And her black eyes danced with mischief and enticement.

"And where is he now?" asked her companion, after he had given her another look which brought the burning colour to her cheeks once more.

"How on earth should I know?" was her answer, and as she made it, she turned her head

round and looked him full in the face. "How on earth should I know?" she repeated. "You don't imagine, I suppose, that I correspond with all the friends of my youth. No, no; I never think of people when they are out of my sight. I have no one that I care about enough to think of in absence, and I never write a letter, if I can possibly avoid it."

"I understood, when Mr. Felton came to London, he had not heard from his son for some time, and he has certainly not seen him there."

"Very likely Master Arthur is not a particularly dutiful son. However, his father will see him here, if he stays till next week, that's a fact."

"What sort of person is Mr. Felton's son? I can't say I admire the old gentleman much."

"No! Don't get on with him? I should think not, neither do I; but Arthur's not in the ve-ry least like him. Not nearly so good-looking; not like the Feltons, I should say, at all; like his mother. His cousin, though he's a big booby, is a good-looking fellow, and looks like a gentleman. Now that's just what Arthur does not look like."

"And what is just what he does look like?" asked her companion, who took what he thought was a secret pleasure in hearing this unknown admirer of the beautiful woman who had captivated his fancy spoken of in depreciating terms. But he was quite mistaken. Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge discerned this amiable sentiment with perfect distinctness, and gave it all the nutriment to be supplied by the most consummate and dexterous coquetry.

"H'm!" she said, with a bewitching air of thought and deliberation. "What does Arthur Felton look like? Very like a Yankee, and a little like a Jew;" and she laughed most musically.

As Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge drove her grey ponies towards the little white town, the carriage passed, near a turn in one of the level shady roads, a bench placed between two tall slim trees. Between the bench and the road lay a broad pathway, with a grassy edge. A lady, simply dressed, of a small slight figure, and whose face was bent downwards, but in whose air there was unmistakable refinement, was sitting on the bench, and leaning a little forward, was making marks upon the ground with her parasol, less in idleness than in the abstraction of thought. As the ponies trotted merrily by, and their mistress laughed, rather loudly but musically, the lady looked up, and the eyes of the two women met. The gentleman who sat by the fair American, and who was on the side of the carriage nearest to the pathway, was so absorbed in the animated conversation being carried on between them, that he did not notice the solitary figure, nor see that anything had attracted his companion's attention. Indeed, the attraction was but momentary; the look had hardly been interchanged before the carriage whirled past Harriet Routh.

She came forward upon the footpath, and looked after the fast receding figure of her husband, as he bent deferentially towards the woman she had seen that morning, until she could see it no longer; and still stood there when the level shaded road was blank and empty.

HARLEQUIN'S EARLY DAYS.

THE progress of December directs the thoughts of many of us towards the pantomimes, and these are naturally associated with harlequin. We all know that that motley personage came in the first instance from Italy, though he underwent strange modifications before he assumed the peculiar shape in which he now, every Christmas, presents himself to the patrons of the English theatres. We have all some general notion about a certain kind of Italian drama, in which the actors, of which he was one of the principal, played extempore. But I think I can fill up this mere outline of knowledge with something that is less generally familiar, and that at this season will not be altogether unacceptable. At all events, I will make the attempt.

Though the Masked Comedy and the *Commedia dell'Arte* had much in common, and are both equally distinct from the *Commedia Erudita*, or "learned comedy" of Italy, they are not to be confounded with each other, as is too commonly the case. The dialogue of the *commedia dell'arte* was spoken extempore, though in accordance with a given plot, and the gaps that occurred in the progress of the piece were filled up by certain gesticular pleasantries, devised by arlecchino, or harlequin, and called "lazzi." The word "lazzo," though in dictionaries it will be found with "jest" as its equivalent, seems to have been a form of "laccio," which denotes a "snare," and primarily a "tie." It was by means of the "lazzo" that harlequin tied the disjointed scenes together. The dictionary meaning probably followed the theatrical usage, as frequently happens in other countries. I may here take the opportunity of warning the reader against the very strong temptation he will feel to translate "*commedia dell'arte*" into "Comedy of Art." The rendering looks so very easy and natural, it agrees so nicely with one's lexicon, it has respectable authority on its side, and it harmonises so beautifully with our modern fashion of calling things "artistic," that one cannot reject it without a sigh. The primitive Italian comedy was so artistic, that its compatriots, with one accord, determined to call it the "artistic comedy," the "comedy of art," as distinguished from all other dramatic works, past, present, and to come. What a splendid vision of precocious perfection rises before the eyes. It is said of the old English harlequin, Rich, who first opened Covent Garden Theatre, that his representation of the hatching of the motley gentleman from an egg by the heat of the sun, was a masterpiece of dumb show. First the egg was chipped, then he gradually received

motion, then with becoming timidity he felt the ground, then he stood upright, and at last, convinced of his independent powers, he danced in triumph round the fragments of the shell. What a sublime thought that the very first harlequin in the world was equally clever at his birth. Unfortunately, "arte" denotes "trade" as well as "art," or, more properly speaking, can be used in the same sense as our own word, when we say that a 'prentice learns the art and mystery of dyeing, &c. The "*commedia dell'arte*" was first so called because it was performed by professional comedians, and not by those amateurs of the court and the universities who were so conspicuous at the time of the revival of learning. Perhaps if we translate the expression "guild comedy," we shall not go very far wrong.

It is on record that the inventor of the *commedia dell'arte* was Francesco Cherca, a favourite comedian of that noted patron of art, Pope Leo the Tenth, but the statement must be received with very considerable reservation. Even if we were wholly unacquainted with the admitted connexion between the Italian masks and the primitive farces of the ancient Romans, we might be perfectly sure that a drama without written dialogue, but carried out in conformity with some sort of plot, existed long before history, properly so called, began, and in countries that have not been deemed dramatic. The Puritan children of New England, mentioned by Mr. Hawthorne, who amiably played at "scourging Quakers," must have gone dramatically to work, though they had never seen a stage-play, or, perhaps, heard of one in their lives. There must have been a Quaker to be scourged, an executioner to inflict, and a judge whose sentence gave authority to the proceeding. Without three parts, in the strict theatrical sense of the word, nothing could be conformed to the title of the kindly game, and I do not think that I indulge in wild hypothesis when I conjecture that the finest part was that of the executioner. However we may classify the drama, by dividing it into species, or into schools, a play, to be a play at all, must be a story represented by action. Whether it have written dialogue, or extempore dialogue, or no dialogue at all, is a secondary consideration. Probably in some countries the action in dumb-show preceded the extempore dialogue, while in others it was otherwise, and in either case a plot, however rude or simple, must have been agreed upon by the performers. But that a fixed invariable dialogue, written in more erudite countries, orally taught to illiterate troops, must have been the result of an after-thought, seems to me beyond the possibility of a doubt. The first object of the fixed dialogue must have been further to limit the sphere of action already defined by the plot. Possibly the more lively actors spoke too much, the slower "coaches" too little, and the least retentive tried to maintain a dumb show where none was designed. At all events, we may assume that the thing regulated preceded the regulation. A

fixed dialogue necessarily presupposes extempore talk.

I am perfectly aware that an objection may be raised to my theory of dramatic development, from the fact that the most primitive plays which we have in a printed shape are precisely those which seem to consist almost wholly of talk, with scarcely any action whatever. Not to enlarge on this subject, to which I may return on some future occasion, I would say that I am not here referring to the growth of dramatic literature, but to the beginning of the drama, before its connexion with literature arose. The very existence of a dramatic literature is a comparatively modern fact—modern, I mean, with reference to the civilisation of the different countries in which it has been manifest.

Certain, too, it appears that Francesco Chereca could not have been the inventor of those masked figures by which the business of the *commedia dell' arte*, as well as those of the masked comedy (of which presently) were carried on, and which are indirectly represented by our Christmas pantomimes. The masks, there is every reason to believe, were old familiar figures, whose origin belongs to the remotest ages, and cannot be assigned to one fertile brain, even though it were the brain of an inventive Italian.

We may, however, assume that Chereca was among the first—perhaps the very first—to bring together, on the same stage, the masked figures who had previously been scattered over various districts. He may also have reduced the *commedia dell' arte* to a shape more regular than previously belonged to it. The peculiar use made of the harlequin in connecting the scenes may have been his device, and he may have substituted a written plot for one merely talked over by the performers.

Possibly, too, the performances by his troop first received the name "*commedia dell' arte*." Whether any of these truly national comedies were even seen by Leo the Tenth seems doubtful. Francesco Chereca was called Terentiano Chereca, from the very admirable manner in which he played the character in the Eunuchus of Terence; and certainly if he made much out of a part so unpromising, he was a very clever fellow. There is no inconsistency, it should be observed, in the supposition that the same actor played in an "erudite comedy" on one day, and in a "*commedia dell' arte*" on the next. Indeed, such was then the common practice of Italian performers, who, however accustomed to extempore dialogue, seem always to have been ready to learn any words that were set down for them. Even the early English actors of the Elizabethan period were not devoid of a faculty of acting extempore, which was applied even to tragedy. Among one of the most curious relics of the olden time, is a "*platt*" or plot, entitled the "Second Part of the Seven Deadly Sins," written by Tarleton the clown, and preserved at Dulwich College. To this "*platt*," which comprises three tragical stories, with a sort of connecting chorus, the actors had to supply the

dialogue, and among the names of those employed occurs that of Richard Burbadge, afterwards so distinguished as an actor of Shakespeare's plays.

However, it seems very doubtful whether Francesco Chereca ever favoured his patron, Pope Leo, with a "*commedia dell' arte*." He seems to have introduced this class of drama into Venice, when driven from the papal dominions by the famous sack of Rome, that took place in 1527, during the papacy of Clement the Seventh. Did he merely take an extempore drama from one city to another, or did he find at Venice a public which required a theatrical entertainment of a kind different from that which found favour at Rome, and begin, as it were, a new professional career, by presenting in a new form a material that had long been familiar with the public mind, and to which a national interest was attached? That Venice was particularly fitted for the birth of a formal "*commedia dell' arte*" may be inferred from the enthusiasm with which the strange plays of Carlo Gozzi were received there more than two centuries afterwards, and which was owing to the novel manner in which the old masked figures were employed. An early reformer of the "*commedia dell' arte*" was Flamminio Scala, who not only introduced a new method of impersonation and gesticulation, but printed the plots which had previously been given in manuscript.

Akin to the "*commedia dell' arte*," but, as I have already observed, not to be confounded with it, was the "masked comedy," in which the dialogue, though spoken by the conventional personages, was regularly written down, as in a "*commedia erudita*." There was, however, this peculiarity of the dialogue of the "masked comedy," that it was written in the dialects of which the several characters were representatives. The founder of this kind of drama seems to have been one Beolco, professionally named Ruzanti, who flourished in Padua early in the sixteenth century, and is said first to have introduced the masked figure, Pantaloon, who always spoke in the dialect of a Venetian tradesman. Bergamo supplied him with two comic servants, Harlequin, the stupid bungler, and Scapin, the knavish valet, who were classed together as the "Zanni," or "Zanies" of the troop. From Ferrara he took Brighella, a mustachioed rogue, and Pullicenella, anglicised as Punch, came, I need hardly say, from Naples. The result of this heterogeneous mixture of nationalities is, that the comedies of Ruzanti, of which there are six extant, are scarcely readable even by literary Italians.

Though the name of "masked comedy" is given to the class of drama of which Ruzanti was the originator, it must not be supposed that every one of the persons wore masks on their faces. Only pantaloon, brighella, harlequin, and the Bolognese doctor were thus disguised. Still the general appearance and dialect of each person remained the same into whatever piece he was introduced. It is this fixity of the dramatis

personæ that distinguishes the masked comedy from the "commedia erudita," to which, in the conduct of the plot, it bears a much stronger affinity than it does to the "commedia dell'arte," which in other respects it so closely resembles.

One of the "commedia dell'arte," composed by Flamminio Scala (mentioned above), has been fully described by Dr. J. L. Klein, a most industrious student of dramatic literature, who is at present engaged on an elaborate history of the Italian drama, of which he has completed the first volume. As Tarleton's tragical outline is called a "platt," or "plot," the comical outlines of Flamminio Scala are styled "canevasi," or canvases, and of these a collection of fifty was published at Venice in 1611.

Dr. Klein, to whom I am indebted for much of the information given above, has translated into German the argument of the selected piece, which is entitled *Il Fido Amico* (The Faithful Friend), the lists of characters and "properties," and the entire canvas of the first of three acts. The list of "properties" (called in the original "robbe per la commedia") looks comical enough, and is as follows:—"Many lanterns, blood and plaister to make the semblance of a wound, a chair with a high back, many pieces of linen and bandages to tie up a broken head, a lantern for the sbirri." This last lantern is no doubt a special article, with an official dignity about it, that altogether distinguished it from the many lanterns previously named.

There is no indication of painted scenery; but the action of *Il Fido Amico* is supposed to take place in the city of Naples, and the first act commences with the entrance, by night, of Pantaloon, with a lighted lantern, who states that he has informed the authorities of the flight of his daughter Isabella, and strongly suspects that the Doctor Gratiano is the guilty party. His servant, Harlequin, now appearing, expresses his suspicions of Oratio, a young nobleman, who enters after the retirement of the others, and informs Pedrolino, also one of Pantaloon's servants, that he has carried off Isabella, and has entrusted her to the care of his friend Flavio, the doctor's son. Pedrolino warns him not to place too much confidence in Flavio, and talks to him of the love with which he has inspired Flavio's sister, Flamminia. This warning is overheard by Harlequin. Isabella, at a signal from Oratio, steals out of the doctor's house and tells Oratio that his friend is not yet returned. She asks him if he ever loved another—a question to which he confidently replies in the negative—and she implores him to remove her with all possible speed from her present place of concealment. This Oratio promises, and sends her back into the house, with the assurance that it contains all that is dear to him on earth. This conversation is overheard by Flamminia, who appears at the window of her father's house. Oratio retires on the entrance of Pantaloon and Harlequin, the latter of whom acquaints the former with all that he has overheard, and the Doctor

Gratiano now approaches with a lantern in his hand, on his way home to supper. Pantaloon invites himself to partake of the meal, but Gratiano says he has nothing for him, and retires on the pretext that he has lost a paper of importance. This proceeding confirms Pantaloon in the belief that the doctor has something to do with his daughter's flight, and Harlequin offers to enter the house by means of a ladder, asserting that he has often done so before, in order to pay clandestine visits to the servant Olivetta, his sweetheart. When they have returned to their house to make the necessary preparations for carrying this scheme into execution, Flamminia reappears at her window, expressing her astonishment that her father and brother have not returned, and her ardent love for Oratio. Her soliloquy is overheard by Isabella, who lodges on the floor beneath, and who calls her down, whereupon they both discourse in the street, for the benefit, I presume, of the audience. Isabella receives the unpleasant information that she has been deceived by Oratio, who loves Flamminia, and has been carried off for the sake of Flavio. At this dismal news she bursts into tears, and imploring Flamminia to watch over her honour, returns to the house, as does also Flamminia after she has uttered a short prayer to Cupid, entreating that potent deity to alienate the heart of Oratio from Isabella. Captain Spavento—a permanent conventional character of the Italian stage, based on the "Miles Gloriosus" of Plautus, and with attributes like Jonson's Bobadil, now comes with a company of musicians to salute Isabella, who has been promised to him by her father, and of whose flight he is ignorant. Gratiano reappears on his way home to supper, and the captain, like Pantaloon, invites himself to partake of it; but Gratiano professes to fast, and goes home, whereupon the captain orders his musicians to strike up, and the music brings out Harlequin, who asks for whom the *matinata* is intended. From the use of this word "*matinata*," when we should expect to find "*serenata*," or *serenade*, it may be conjectured that sunrise is now approaching. To denote music at break of day, the French I may observe, have the word "*aubade*," but I am not aware that there is an exact equivalent to *matinata* in English. In answer to Harlequin's questions, the captain says that the music is intended for his affianced spouse Isabella, and he now for the first time hears of her flight. His rage is shown by a volley of imprecations, which frightens Harlequin into the house, and brings out Pedrolino, who pretends to carry a cross-bow under his cloak, and causes the captain and his band to flee from the stage in terror. Pedrolino laughs heartily, and Pantaloon now comes out to see the cause of disturbance, with a lantern, which Harlequin, who appears with his ladder, blows out. The ladder is duly placed against Gratiano's house and mounted by Harlequin, when Pedrolino, who has concealed himself, issues forth, using a feigned voice, cudgels Pantaloon, and so much terrifies Harlequin that he falls from the ladder. With this practical

joke, which was doubtless perpetrated in the true clown-and-pantaloon style, the first act terminates.

In the second act we find Flavio unwilling to go home, through the honourable motive that he is deeply in love with Isabella, and fears to compromise his friend Oratio. Pedrolino counsels him to subdue this passion, and afterwards, without assigning a reason, advises Oratio to remove Isabella from her present place of concealment, having first put on the dress of a Spaniard, as likely to cause terror. There is then a comic scene between the captain, Pantaloon, and Harlequin, who jostle against each other in the dark, till Flavio, sword in hand, puts the captain to flight, and remains alone on the stage. Isabella, attracted from the house, asks him why he does not come in to supper, whereupon he alleges a passion for a lady, but refuses to say who she is. Pedrolino loudly calls Isabella by name, and his voice brings forward the captain, whom he takes for Oratio in the Spanish disguise, and exhorts Isabella to follow him. She complies, and Flamminia, who has watched the whole proceeding from her window, and falls into the same mistake as Pedrolino, bewails her hapless lot, and is heard by Flavio, who pities her sorrows and deplores his own. Pedrolino, who has discovered his blunder, now appears in terror, and declares that Isabella is gone off with the captain. Flavio hastens to her rescue, and Flamminia, overjoyed, entering Isabella's chamber, puts on the hat and cloak which she has left behind. Now, at last, Oratio comes disguised as a Spaniard, and is on the point of carrying off Flamminia, whom he mistakes for Isabella, when he is interrupted by the watch, the captain of whom sends the supposed Isabella home to his own wife and daughter, and summons Oratio to appear in the morning before the viceroy. Oratio is left in a dismal mood, but is presently cheered by Flavio, who reappears to assure him that he has rescued Isabella from the captain, and lodged her with a lady named Franceschina. A squabble between Pantaloon and the doctor, which was, no doubt, carried on with the utmost violence, ends the second act.

Day now dawns. Oratio hears from Franceschina, who, it seems, is a lodging-house keeper, the generous devotion of Flavio, and also that Isabella has left the lodging to return to her father's house. He is next informed by Harlequin of the wrath of Pantaloon, by whose orders the watch had intercepted Isabella in her flight, and who threatens to hang Pedrolino. In the mean while, Pantaloon has discovered that the person captured is Flamminia disguised as Isabella; and Flavio, who learns this and believes that Oratio has proved unfaithful to his love, in the plenitude of his indignation resolves to kill Flamminia. Meeting Isabella on her way home to her father, Pantaloon, he tells her all that he has heard; but the sbirri making their appearance, summon him to the court on the charge of an attack upon the watch, which, I presume, occurred when he rescued the sham Isabella

from Captain Spavento. He draws his sword on the sbirri, who retire, having first wounded him in the head, which is now bandaged by the weeping Isabella. He is taken into Pantaloon's house, and his serious misfortune is burlesqued by a comic scene between Captain Spavento, who enters with his head bandaged, and Pantaloon, who in vain endeavours to find his wound. The story is now brought to a happy conclusion. Pantaloon pardons his daughter, and Oratio, deeply moved by the emotion of his friend, resigns Isabella in his favour, and marries Flamminia instead. What were the feelings of Isabella on being thus coolly used to pay a debt of gratitude we have no means of learning; but as she was represented by a lady, who in her day was reckoned not the greatest of all actresses, tragic or comic, but the most virtuous of her sex, we have no doubt they were very adequately expressed.

It will be observed that, notwithstanding the complexity of the action above described, the unities of time and place are severely preserved, and that were the revival of the play demanded at the present day, it would be brought out with a single scene, exactly the same in principle as that employed for the representation of Terence's comedies at Westminster. On one side would stand the house of Pantaloon, on the other that of the doctor, while the stage would represent the street.

CAROL FOR CHRISTMAS.

Be comforted, O earth,
Break forth, and sing
A song of praise
For happier days;
He is coming—the great King!

Be comforted, ye poor.
God's garner, open wide,
Shall ample store provide
For evermore.
The chains that curst,
Asunder burst,
In troops the prisoners from the dungeons rise,
Half scared, and dazzled quite,
To meet the gracious light,
The light of emerald earth and azure skies.

Oh, broken hearts, and weary,
That find this life so dreary,
And ye tormented,
That have lain
Long years in pain,
Waiting for death in vain;
And ye despised ones,
All out of sight and thought,
That seem to count for nought
On this unfriendly earth,
Fear not; to Him ye are of tender worth;
And He cometh, the great King,
The Angel of the covenant,
With healing on His wing!

Rejoice, rejoice, O earth,
Break forth and sing
A psalm of praise
For happier days,
He is coming, the great King!

Rejoice, ye faithful, ye
That watch and wait;
And, eager to divine
Each slow unfolding sign,
Press forth to meet the Bridegroom at the gate.
Ye bearers of His cross,
That, cheerful, take,
For His loved sake,
Despise and shame, and pain and loss;
Ye workers that, from earliest morn,
The burden and the heat have borne,
Ye that have mourn'd your evil day,
And sought betimes the better way,
Ye blessed children of the blest, rejoice!
Lift up your voice,
And one long glorious anthem raise
In your great Master's praise.

Rejoice, O happy earth,
Beneath His sway benign.
He is the peerless One,
The priceless, the Divine!
He is the King of kings,
O earth, and He is thine!

The Holy One, the Just;
Start, sinner, from your lair!
Wake, dreamer, from your dream,
And meet Him as ye dare!

Quail, ye who never fear'd till now!
Blanch, boastful lip and brazen brow!
Blasphemers and profane,
Voluptuous, dyed
With leprous stain—
Defamers of the good,
Betrayers in cold blood,
Incarnate fiends that wear
The saintly garb, beware!
And meet Him as ye dare!

O much-abused earth,
For all so fair and green,
Against thee hath gone forth
The cry, "Unclean! unclean!"

How wilt thou bear to see
Thy history's page unrolled?
Reveal'd the shameful mystery,
The horrid secret told?

Fear much, but trust Him more;
For He will purge His floor,
And with a mighty whirlwind clear
The tainted atmosphere.
All things renew
In form and hue,
Till earth resume
Her pristine bloom,
And Eden re-appear.

He cometh, the great King
In glory to reclaim
The lost inheritance, blood-bought
Upon the tree of shame.

And we shall look on Him, whom we have pierced!
That patient brow
Once laid so low,
With light divine resplendent now!

Be comforted, O earth,
Be comforted for ever!
It is the glorious harvest time
For every race, in every clime.

Along the wastes of death
Reviving waters flow,
And on the desert heath
Sweet Sharon's roses blow!

He cometh, the great King,
The bounteous, the benign!
Rejoice, redeemed earth,
At last to call Him thine.

Receive the gift of gifts,
Himself—the glorious giver,
And great thy children's peace shall be
For ever and for ever!

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE SPAFIELDS RIOTS.

A MODERN historian calls Lord Sidmouth "a rat-catcher," so celebrated did that suspicious statesman become for training spies, drilling informers, ripening, bringing to a head, and quashing, small conspiracies. He was no Nestor, but he acted according to his lights; and his ideal was, not the correction of abuses in the constitution, but the suppression of their more dangerous enemies.

Some years after the Spafelds riots, when the oppressive Six Acts had been passed, and Orator Hunt and Bamford the Radical author stood before the privy council, they were surprised to find the cruel Castlereagh a handsome elegant person in a plum-coloured coat, and "the ferocious rat-catcher," Lord Sidmouth, an affable tall bony old man, with thin greyish hair, broad forehead, and mild intelligent eyes looking out blandly from "cavernous orbits."

Starvation is the mother of sedition. In 1816, Castle, Oliver, and other government spies, had informed the great government rat-catcher that the Radicals were growing dangerous, and, in fact, rapidly organising for an armed outbreak. At many of the Hampden clubs, particularly in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire, revolution had become an object openly avowed. The more moderate men were agitating for universal suffrage and annual parliaments. There is no concealing the fact now that in 1816 the general distress and discontent had led the rasher and more ignorant of the reformers into dangerous schemes. It is on record that at the trial of two men at the Edinburgh Court of Justiciary, in 1817, it was proved that the oath administered at their reform club in 1816 had ended with the following clause, worthy of a German secret tribunal:

"I will support the same to the utmost of my power, either by moral or physical strength, as the cause may require; and I do further swear that neither hopes, fears, rewards, nor punishments shall induce me to inform on, or give evidence against, any member or members, collectively or individually, for any act or expression done or made in or out of this or similar societies, under the punishment of death to be inflicted on me by any member or members of such societies."

Men, hopeless of reform by any means but force, who could sign such an oath, were quite ready to burn Bristol, or to plot with the Cat-street conspirators. That wise minister of Henry Quatre, Sully, speaking from the depth of his long life's experience, and in an age of revolutions, said, profoundly: "The people never revolt from fickleness or the mere desire of change. It is the impatience of suffering that alone produces revolutions." Looking back now, we can all see clearly the misery that gave rise to the troubles of 1816-1830, and we can deplore the violence that so long delayed the irresistible advance of reform.

Narrow-minded, severe men, like Lord Sidmouth, supposed all the Radicals of that period were incendiaries and Jacobins. But there were many strands to the rope by which reform was slowly dragged up from the bottom of the Dead Sea of Chinese conservatism. There were shrewd honest sincere, though embittered and virulent men, like Cobbet; calm tiresome enthusiasts, with one idea, like old Major Cartwright; selfish blustering glib demagogues, like Orator Hunt; dignified condescending persistent men of the people, like Sir Francis Burdett; dangerous revengeful malignant adventurers, like Thistlewood; and bluff disappointed venturous politicians, like dauntless Lord Cochrane.

The ministers fervently believed that the reformers intended to overthrow the government, to plunder the City, to subdivide land, to throw open the prisons, to fire the barracks, to attack the Tower and the Bank, and to barricade London-bridge in order to stop the artillery coming from Woolwich. According to the reports of their spies, soldiers were to be bribed with a hundred guineas each. The wild talk of a few starving desperate men was represented to Lord Sidmouth as the deliberate plans of all the radical clubs in England. The informers had disclosed that the five commanders of the people were to be Thistlewood, then a subaltern in the Marines; "Dr." Watson, a quondam surgeon, his son, Castle (the spy), and Preston, a lame operative. Pikes and arms were already provided, and points of attack selected. The army once bought over, the Committee of Public Safety was to consist of such true patriots as Sir Francis Burdett, Alderman Wood (the Lord Mayor), Lord Cochrane, Orator Hunt, Major Cartwright, Gale Jones (a chemist), Roger O'Connor, Mr. Fawkes (a Yorkshire squire), Sam Brookes, Thompson of Holborn-hill, the Watsons, and that indefatigable plotter, Thistlewood.

The Spenceans were great workers in these agitations. These theorists were disciples of a Yorkshire schoolmaster who had been prosecuted in 1800 for an absurd plan of making the government farm all the land in England, and divide the produce among the people. The high-flown speculators in moonshine held their meetings in humble places—at the Cock in Grafton-street Soho, at the Mulberry Tree in Moorfields, the Nag's Head in Carnaby Market, and a public-house in Lumber-street, Borough.

It was to a conglomeration of such dupes, dupers, speculators, fanatics, and madmen, that London was indebted for the Spa-fields riots. Quiet reformers were the gulls of the violent and the sanguine; and the violent were the gulls of the infamous spies, who urged and goaded them to immediate action, and exaggerated the sympathy and support with which their outbreak would be received. Many credulous men, rendered impatient by hunger, believed that any change must be for the best, and that the mob had only to rise and seize their rights from a paralysed ministry.

In the mean time, Cobbett (who, a year later, had to fly to America to avoid prosecution) sowed his Weekly Register broadcast over the country, rousing the people to claim their privileges, and teaching them many bitter but wholesome lessons. The whole country was in a state of effervescence like a seidlitz-powder glass when the powder of the white packet meets the powder of the blue: over London, especially, the air seemed heavy with thunder-clouds. The rat-catcher was watching, with his dogs ready in leash, eager for an overt act which would enable him to pull the slips. Great must have been the alarm and yet delight of Lord Sidmouth when he heard that Orator Hunt had convened a great reform meeting in Spa-fields, on the 15th of November, 1816. Now he should have them. The Guards soon received their orders how to act, to prevent the anticipated plunder and conflagration of the city.

Spa-fields—so called from the chalybeate springs between that district and Sadler's Wells, popular with London citizens about the reign of George the Second, and since neglected—consisted, in 1816, of a large unenclosed space, with Coldbath-fields prison (erected in 1794) on one side, frowning down on it with its dismal spiked walls. It was accessible from Smithfield on the south, the City-road on the east, Islington on the north, Pentonville on the west. The Merlin's Cave public-house, being adjacent, was convenient for men thirsty with bawling and huzzaing, and the forbidding sooty bulk of the prison was most useful as an object of denunciation for the speech-makers.

When a government is oppressive, and the people are starving, demagogues spring up as surely as the yellow leather fungus starts from rotten timber. They are glib men, who trade on public grievances. Their business is to flatter and to inflame. The more sincere they are, the more dangerous. Hunt was probably, in his way, honest, seeing that he died a quiet member of parliament, and a peaceful vendor of roasted corn and blacking. It was his profession to agitate, and his inordinate vanity required the incessant applause of the mob.

This Hunt, whom Thistlewood afterwards denounced as a secret spy, whose name would be found first in the Whitehall ledger, was an Essex farmer, a tall stout healthy fair man, rather handsome, but with an irritable and spiteful mouth. He had fair hair, a double

chin, and a blustering ready wit. His gesture was awkward, his style disjointed, his voice croaking, and his accent provincial; but his energy and readiness won the people. His querulous cowardice in Ilchester jail disenchanted his admirers, and showed the man selfish, shallow, and purposeless.

The meeting on Friday, the 15th, was ostensibly to consider the propriety of petitioning the Prince Regent on the distressed state of the country. The distress was only too evident. The meeting, so far, was justifiable; for taxes were still as heavy as during the war, and government showed no signs of lowering them. Spafields teemed with rough eager men, Irish from Gray's Inn courts, watchmakers from Clerkenwell, butchers from Newgate-street, shopmen from Holborn and Cheapside, coatless weavers from Spitalfields, and dangerous-looking fellows from Whitechapel. In great greasy waves the hardy hungry mass surged round the black prison walls, and jostled and fought their way to the centre of the whirlpool that rolled and billowed in its impatience for the man of the people—Cobbett's friend—the denouncer of the Regent and all the foes of freedom. A company of the Guards, commanded by Captain Gronow, was sent to garrison the Spafields prison, whose outer walls they instantly loopholed for musketry. Flying artillery, also drawn up in the court-yard, was in ambuscade behind the prison gates.

At half-past twelve, the Rev. Mr. Parke addressed the crowd from the window of a hackney-coach. Having let the lion loose, it was now necessary to advise the lion to behave well. He urged tranquillity on a hundred thousand people met to feel their own power. But they must, anyhow, maintain their rights and liberties. The meeting then adjourned to the Merlin's Cave, and there, at about one, Hunt and the Watsons, wearing cockades, arrived in an open chariot, waving Reform flags. Thunders of cheers when the well-known white hat (then a badge of the Radical cause) appeared gliding over the black waves of heads that parted shouting before his carriage, and closed roaring behind it. The roar of a south-western gale when his well-known blue frock-coat and yellow waistcoat drew nearer. Fresh hurricanes when his top-boots—the top-boots that marked the bold honest farmer—appeared before their eyes.

Soon that brazen, oily-tongued man, with the fair fat face, set to work with extended hands, waving his white hat, and clenching his fist. He denounced the hireling press that ridiculed him. The papers talked (as talking gentlemen in parliament have since talked) of the improvidence and indolence of the poor. It was untrue. What was the cause of non-employment? Taxation. What was the cause of taxation? Corruption. He pointed to Cold-bath-fields prison, called it "the British Bastille," and hinted at a bad end to it. It was the people's duty, he said, to petition *before employing physical force*. What insolence it was in profligate minions of government to say people suffered nothing from taxation! "They had

heard of an impudent fellow called George Canning; a man who had the audacity, the unparalleled insolence, to call the people of England a swinish multitude, offscourings, and all sorts of opprobrious epithets. But who was this Canning? What was his family? Who were his ancestors? Where was his nobility? The Whigs were wolves in sheep's clothing. They had attempted to put down the friends of freedom. They had brought a gowmsman, a Mr. Brougham, to the hustings to overpower *him* (Hunt), but he had sent him packing, neck and heels." Hunt then, amid whirlwinds of cheers, praised Burdett, Major Cartwright, and Cobbett, and anathematised the Tories. He concluded by proposing an address to the Prince Regent, begging him to convene parliament, in order that public wrongs might be redressed. The elder Watson seconded the motion. The many-headed monster waved its mixed hands, like weapons in the air. The meeting was then adjourned for a fortnight; the next mob would be larger, more prepared, more dangerous. Hunt sat down at last. Instantly his horses were unharnessed and led off, and the mob seized his chariot and dragged it, shouting. Eventually the too impulsive mob ran the chariot against a wall, and so disabled it (Hunt secretly cursing at the expense) that the demagogues had to get out and walk. Hunt retired to his hotel in Bouverie-street, where the Spencean philanthropists thrust themselves upon him, and philanthropically shared his dinner, and proposed philanthropical toasts. There, too, came Castle, the spy, and proposed an infamous and detestable toast; not being kicked out, he remained, and fell into a fox sleep, listening as he slept. The crowd rolled hither and thither after nightfall. They stole some bread at a baker's near Exeter 'Change. They carried off some fish in the Strand. They broke the windows of some bakers in St. Martin's-lane. They attacked and hurt several Bow-street officers. But there were no leaders; the time was not ripe; by degrees the crowds went home, and by nine all was quiet.

On the 2nd of December the adjourned meeting took place, amid universal alarm. Mr. Hunt, in his inflexible white hat, came to town from Essex in his tandem. As he bowled along Cheapside at about twenty minutes to one o'clock, he was stopped by Castle, the spy, who was moving with the crowd, and told by that reliable person that it was no use going on to Spafields, as the meeting had been broken up two hours before, and that the people were then advancing on the Tower, which the reformers had seized an hour ago. Our country squire was too shrewd. He wanted talk and applause, not action and bloodshed, so on he went. The spy was, nevertheless, partly right; for a sedition had indeed already broken out in Skinner-street.

Hunt was at Merlin's Cave by one o'clock; a Mr. Clarke was already in the chair. Again the orator poured forth his denunciations. Finding, he said, that Sir Francis Burdett was at Brighton, he (Hunt) himself had undertaken to

present the people's petition to the Prince Regent. He had been to Carlton House, and had asked for an audience. He was there told to present the petition through the Home Secretary at the next levee. He had then carried it to Lord Sidmouth's office. Lord Sidmouth had received him politely (artful old rat-catcher), and the next day had written to say that he had presented the petition, but on no occasion had the present royal family ever returned answers to petitions except from the city of London or the universities. But the petition had been *attended to*. The Regent had sent five thousand pounds to the soup committee, but it came from droits of Admiralty, of which the sailors had been robbed. What should be done next? Would they give up the thing? (No, no.) He was not to be put down by calumny. They had had the honour of being attended by a regular army. He would tell the people how to oppose their artillery, by the artillery of reason, truth, and justice. He would go on, if all the artillery of Europe were in that field against him. Parliament was to meet on the 28th of January, and he would propose some resolutions and a petition to the House of Commons. Would they all sign? (Yes, yes.) Hoped they'd disperse quietly. Moved resolutions—same as those proposed at the Common Hall ten days before by Mr. Waltham. A Mr. Haydon seconded them. Carried unanimously. Hunt moved a petition to parliament for a general reform. Waddington seconded. Hunt moved that Lord Cochrane (then in *persecution*) should present it. Part of meeting wished Burdett should join Lord Cochrane. That amendment was at length carried, and the tumultuous meeting adjourned quietly to the second Monday after the meeting of parliament. Hunt rode home on horseback like a conqueror, to his hotel in Bouverie-street, and was cheered loudly by that deluge of a crowd. It was well for the orator that the meeting did end tranquilly, for the Guards had been in readiness at various points, as Gronow, that agreeable dandy, one of their officers, informs us.

But Hunt did not go half far enough for the Spenceans and the Red Republican party, who wanted plunder, revolution, and murder. Violent men had arrived at Spafelds, an hour before Hunt arrived. It had probably been held advisable thus to anticipate the soldiers, and make an early dash at the gunsmiths' shops (*à la mode de Paris*) before marching on the Tower, which to the eyes of men like Thistlewood fully represented the Bastille. There were no prisoners in the Tower, true, nor had it ever been a stronghold of oppression, but, theatrically, it was necessary to consider it the Bastille, and therefore it was to be taken by storm. Certain conspirators, who wished to turn all to mischief, had already arranged their plans, hoping to be followed by the turbulent masses, whatever they did. Early in the morning a mob of two or three hundred persons bore down on Smithfield, increasing as they went, and, joining another mob rolling up from Finsbury-square, proceeded towards Coldbath-fields, where the Spenceans

had already arrived with a waggon containing arms, ammunition, and a banner, on which was inscribed:

"The brave soldiers are our friends. Treat them kindly."

Watson, the surgeon, spoke from the waggon, from which two tricolor flags were displayed, in a violent address, and his son followed him with a speech still more insane and dangerous. He declaimed against the uselessness of petitions till he grew mad with talking. "If they will not give us what we want," screamed the young maniac, "shall we not take it? (Cries of 'Yes.') Are you willing to take it? (Yes.) Will you go and take it? (Yes.) If I jump down amongst you, will you come and take it? (Yes, yes.) Will you follow me?" (Yes, yes, yes, yes.) Down he leaped from the waggon, and rushed towards Coppicewrow; two sailors, Cashman and another, carrying the tricolor flags. A man named Hooper, who wore a tricolor cockade, walked beside the leaders. At Coppicewrow two brave men bearded this mob. Mr. Stafford, the chief clerk of Bow-street, dashed at one of the flags. John Limbrick, an officer from Hatton-garden police-office, hearing a call for help, hurried in, tore down a banner, and collared young Watson: whom Hooper, however, rescued.

About two hundred rioters rushed on to Skinner-street. There was a small dingy gunmaker's shop (one Beckwith's), No. 58, at the corner of Snow-hill, that little knew how famous it was soon to become—quiet enough that morning, with aproned workmen looking down gun-barrels, and trying locks, but soon to be the centre of a popular typhoon, and glared at by a thousand fierce eyes. Shortly after twelve, two or three men, led by young Watson, entered the shop roughly and demanded fire-arms. There were in the shop, from a hundred and fifty to two hundred fowling-pieces, and about two hundred pistols, with ammunition, to the value of thirteen hundred pounds.

Mr. Platt, a gentleman in the shop at the time on business, seeing that the gunsmith himself was absent, and being a relation of Beckwith's, took upon himself kindly to remonstrate with the felonious rioters. Young Watson, being grappled by Platt, either intentionally or accidentally retaliated by shooting him. The pistol-shot was scarcely fired, before compunction came over young Watson, mingled somewhat oddly with professional feeling. He knelt down, and, saying he was a surgeon, examined the groaning and bleeding man. He was at once secured by a Bow-street officer, who sent Mr. Griffin, a perfumer, who was also in the shop at the time, for handcuffs, and carried Watson for security to an upper room. Thereupon gathered round the house a tumultuous and enraged mob, who seized Griffin as he returned with the handcuffs.

Now the work began. A man named Gunnel, in a drayman's dress, smashed in one window with a broomstick. Cashman, the young sailor, a fine athletic young fellow,

whose voyages to America had fired him with republican ideas, and who treated the whole matter as a frolic, broke the second window. Hooper left his flag at the door in charge of a rioter, and shouting, "Follow me—follow me!" came into the shop to grapple with Griffin: who, to save himself, warily said:

"What do you want with me? I come to rescue the man as well as you."

The mob cried, "Where is our leader?"

Beckwith, the apprentice, said he was gone; but the mob instantly ran up-stairs, rescued him, and bore him off in triumph.

On Griffin threatening Hooper with fire-arms, the rioter drew out a pistol and presented it, saying, "I can fire as well as you." Griffin then ran up-stairs in terror.

The mob soon poured in, and snatched the guns and pistols through the broken window. Cashman came into the counting-house, and took off a dozen guns at a time, distributing them to the men at the door. Five or six men also took guns from the glass cases on the counter, and Cashman carried two dozen at one time, and ten at another, and passed them among the cheering crowd. The sailor, and three or four draymen, were conspicuous all through this scene of violence. Cashman kept a gun himself, and the mob then moved on towards Newgate-street, firing guns and waving pistols. Hooper marched beside the man who carried a large red white and green silk flag, which bore the following inscription in gilt letters:

NATURE to feed the hungry.

JUSTICE to punish crimes.

TRUTH to protect the oppressed.

In Cheapside the mob fired off their guns in frantic delight at their first victory.

Radical mobs at this period had usually a dangerous proclivity towards banks. The plunder of the Bank of England was generally the first clause in their programmes. It would have been a pleasant revenge—a terrible blow at a tyrannical and oppressive administration. It would also have recompensed the gallant rioters; but that was of no consequence.

The mob had now reached the north side of the Royal Exchange, towards Threadneedle-street. They had no settled purpose, except that of getting somehow into the Tower. There was no real cohesion among them—no reliable leader. They meant mischief, however, and the flame was spreading. But there were two men quite ready to meet them. The Lord Mayor and Sir James Shaw did not wait for bayonets, nor showers of grape, nor a body-guard of Bow-street runners, but observing the mob loose, scattered, and undetermined, bore down upon them. These two men, with Mr. White and two constables, rushed at the flag. Sir James seized the bearer and several others, one after the other, with his own hands. The stolen guns were not conspicuous then. The rioters had no real heart in the cause, no real purpose in the rioting. Levy, a City constable, took Cashman, the sailor; he had a gun, which was loaded with small-shot, and primed. On drawing the load, Cartwright,

a marshalman, said to the sailor: "There is enough here." To which Cashman replied: "I know that. I brought it on purpose to kill or be killed." Mr. Hodgetts, of Paternoster-row, seeing Sir James Shaw tear down the tricolor flag, sprang forward on the mob also and seized Hooper, under whose coat was found a brace of pistols (not Beckwith's), loaded with ball. Gamble, another man, who was seen at the Exchange busy among the mob, and with a gun on his shoulder, was seized the same day in the Borough, and was at that time carrying a discharged gun. A third man, Carpenter, who was afterwards arrested, was discovered through sending to be pawned a pistol that he had stolen from the shop.

The squib had no bang in it. The game was nearly played out. It was ending in what in American slang is called "a fizzle." The leader, young Watson, one of those fiery shallow natures which are quick to heat and quick to cool, did not appear any more after his attempt at homicide. Hunt, the inciter, was safe in his Bouverie-street hotel, careless of what might happen. Some of the mob passed on towards the Minories, where, safe from the constables' staves, they plundered two more gunsmiths' shops, but did nothing with the arms. They were thieves, but hardly conspirators. Those five men at the Royal Exchange had mopped back the Atlantic, and saved London from plunder and burning. The mob broke windows; and, rallying in Aldgate, were driven by the military towards the Tower. There there was some silly clamour, and a speaker at Radical clubs, Preston, the lame man, scrambled up the walls by the help of a friend's knees and shoulders, and summoned the soldiers to surrender. They laughed, but did not fire; and presently the lame idiot was haled down by his friends. The mob's blood had never been really up. There was no military element in them. Before ten at night the ward constables, patrols, and marshals, passed each other from street to street, from Temple-bar to the Tower-gate, the encouraging words, "All quiet!" Then London, reassured, fell asleep.

On the following Monday, a horse patrol at Higsgate espied three suspicious persons, whom he thought belonged to a gang of which he had information. He and another man rode at them, but two escaped. The third stabbed a man named Rhodes in the right side with a sword, but was captured. He turned out to be the elder Watson, the surgeon, of Newcastle-street, in the Strand. He was tried, but acquitted for want of evidence. In the mean time, a reward of one hundred pounds had been offered for the apprehension of the man who shot Mr. Platt. Young Watson, who was suspected of the crime, remained still hidden, in spite of three weeks' active search, and numerous false arrests.

On January 20, 1817, Cashman, Hooper, Gamble, Gunnell, and Carpenter were tried at the Old Bailey on a charge of stealing guns, blunderbusses, and pistols from the shop of Andrew Beckwith. Every one pitied the frank reckless young sailor, his face browned by foreign

suns, his bearing defiant of death. The evidence was dead against him. He had been seen taking guns from Beckwith's counting-house; he had been seen to seize Griffin, the perfumer; he had been seen in the waggon, carrying the tricolor flag; lastly, he had been apprehended at the Exchange carrying a loaded gun, and had then said to his captor that he meant to kill or be killed.

The evidence of one witness especially proved the preparations for an outbreak made by Hooper, the treasurer of the conspiracy.

Frederick Windermere, of the Horseferry-road, Westminster, stated that on the 27th of November a person called on him and hired a waggon. On Sunday evening, December 1, Hooper and the former person called on him again, and he received directions from both to be at half-past nine o'clock at the top of Chancery-lane. He was there as near to that time as possible. Hooper and another person came to him. They put something into the waggon; two or three poles wrapped in blankets, which he afterwards found to be colours. They also put in a small parcel, which he afterwards found to contain bullets, a can of gunpowder, and some bits of lead. He proceeded towards Spafelds, and Hooper rode in the waggon. Hooper was in the waggon while the mob was there, and held one of the colours. He then promised witness more money for the hire. Cashman was in front of the waggon with the other colours. They went away with the mob, and left witness with the waggon. He afterwards gave the bullets and powder to a police-officer.

Cashman's defence was this: He was a discharged seaman, who had just come up to London from Deptford. On the morning of the riot he had been to the London Hospital to see a sick messmate: returning to Rosemary-lane, Whitechapel, to get his breakfast. He then went with a letter to Admiral Martin, at the Admiralty. He gave it to a gentleman there, who looked at it. As he was returning by "a large church and castle" (St. Paul's), he saw a mob running. A sailor accosted him, gave him a musket, and asked him to take a walk. He consented, and they joined a lot of men marching. He had no idea what it meant, and did not join in any of the excesses that were committed.

This was not quite ingenuous, for at the Mansion House examination, in the first flush of excitement, Cashman had said, "It was my intention to join the mob, for I was starving. Self-preservation was my only object." And when arrested, he had declared he wished to kill or be killed. The simple fact was, Admiral Martin had possibly that morning refused to draught him into a ship, and the hot republican unemployed sailor was savage, and ready for plunder and riot.

The poor young fellow's only witness was Geary: a common sailor, who simply came forward to say that he had known Cashman for eight or nine years, and considered him a very honest man. A statement which did not much affect the question of proved rioting.

All the prisoners seem to have been men out of work, and it shows how closely starvation and rebellion are always allied.

John Hooper admitted that he had worn a tricolored cockade, but his motive was "to take the colours from young Watson." He never entered Mr. Beckwith's shop. His object in going into the City was to beg the Lord Mayor to keep the people quiet. Alexander Harding, a carver and gilder in Westminster, and John Bennet, shoemaker, in Grafton-street, Soho, who had known him from five to eight years, gave him a good character.

Richard Gamble said that on the 2nd of December he met a crowd in Holborn as he was going to look for work. They told him they were going to Spafelds, and he followed them, thinking something good was going to be proposed for mechanics, but he could not get near enough to hear what was said. He picked up a gun in Skinner-street. A friend saw him pick up the gun.

William Gunnel said he did not break Mr. Beckwith's windows, neither was he in the shop.

John Carpenter stated that on the day in question he was out of employment, and went to the London Docks to look for work, but could not get any. He then went to Spitalfields to see a cousin, when he heard there was a riot at the Mansion House. A man put a pistol and some powder and shot in his hand, but he said he had no use for it.

Judge Park summed up, and the jury, after two hours' debate, found Cashman guilty, as they were indeed bound to do. His companions were acquitted.

In the mean time, young Watson, from his hiding-place, had written a letter, referring, no doubt, to the germ of the Cato-street Conspiracy, which exploded some years later:

"My Lord. Seeing I cannot escape the vigilance of the law, or any longer trust to my friends, I presume to make this proposal to your lordship. I will voluntarily come forward if you will give me the reward offered for my apprehension, I not being the person who actually shot Mr. Platt. Money only in the hands of counsel at present will avail me anything in order to substantiate my innocence.

"J. WATSON.

"London, Dec. 10, 1816. ♣

"To Matthew Wood, Esq., Lord Mayor.

"P.S. On being offered a free pardon, I will discover a plot now going on, more dangerous than the Gunpowder one!"

The escape of young Watson was remarkable and worth recording. When the rioters had dispersed from the Minorities, he went to his father's lodgings in Dean-street, Fetter-lane, and, meeting Thistlewood there, they all determined to start in company to Lincolnshire, where the Watsons had friends who would shelter them. When the doctor, who was lame, and had fallen behind, was seized at Highgate, Watson and Thistlewood escaped, and after sleeping in the fields, took refuge at daybreak at

the house of a carpenter, the husband of a servant of Thistlewood's, in East-street, Manchester-square. From Hunt's, Watson was taken to the house of a Mr. Carr, an ornamental painter in Tottenham-court-road, from whence he used to watch the police stop any young men who, like himself, wore a brown great-coat, or had a mole on his face. Finding that a friend of Carr's, named Pemberton (who soon afterwards betrayed Thistlewood), was certain to inform against him, Watson, on the 16th of December, sought a shelter provided for him by a tailor named Moggridge, in Somers-town. Two days after, Carr's house was searched for him. Watson was now secreted at Mr. Holl's, an engraver, in a lonely residence in Bayham-street, Camden-town. Here the most singular precautions were taken: he was passed off as a pupil, and took the name of Dudley. The moles on his face were removed with caustic. On very dark nights only, he took walks in the fields towards Kentish-town. The officers, Vickery and his men, were soon on the track, and houses were searched close to Mr. Holl's. One day Vickery himself was seen watching from the windows of an opposite house. Watson kept pistols always by his side, and on the least alarm prepared for a desperate resistance.

By the advice of a Mr. Pendrill, a bootmaker in Newgate-street—singularly enough a lineal descendant of the man who saved Charles the Second—young Watson resolved to escape to America. He was not only to dress as a Quaker, and disguise himself with stained skin, dyed hair, and wadded clothes, but actually assumed to be a confederate—a provincial Quaker—who gave up to him his letters and such documents as might support the person he pretended to be—the real man going into hiding until the escape was effected. On March 5, young Watson left Mr. Holl, and went to stay at Mr. Pendrill's shop in Newgate-street. While the knell of Cashman was actually groaning through the air, Watson started for Gravesend to join his ship. He arrived safely on board, and the voyage had commenced, when a gun from the shore bade the vessel lie to, and off came a boat with the officers Vickery and Lavender, who instantly boarded the *Venus*, and examined the passengers and crew one by one. Watson would probably have been detected, had not a young woman fainted close to him. The spurious young Quaker, stepping forward to prevent her from falling, so occupied the officers' attention, that they were thoroughly deceived. As he passed between the two watchful keen-eyed men, Watson said his heart beat so loud that he thought the officers must have heard it. Great was his joy when he heard them whisper, "He is not here," and descend into their boat. The fugitive reached America, but died a few years afterwards. The father also went to America after Thistlewood's and his own escape from the jaws of the law. A few days only after Watson's flight, Mr. Holl was seized, and remained a prisoner in Coldbath-fields for six weeks.

In the mean time, the pity felt for Cashman

was great. There was nothing of the conspirator in him; clearly he was only a hot-headed young fellow, restless for want of bread. He was only twenty-eight; born at sea, he had lived a long time in America, having been wounded and made prisoner there during the war. The Reverend Mr. Cotton, the chaplain, did his best to propitiate government, and to ascertain from Cashman what share he had had in the conspiracy. Cashman's unvarying reply was:

"Don't bother me; it's no use; I know nothing about it."

There were shouts of "Murder!" from the mob when he leaped gaily upon the scaffold, which was reared in Skinner-street, opposite Beckwith's. He shouted to the listeners below it:

"Hurrah, my boys, I'll die like a man!"

As he looked across angrily towards the gunshop that he had plundered in such fierce spirits only a few weeks before, he said:

"I'll be with you—there!"

He cried to the astonished crowd:

"Now, you beggars, give me three cheers when I trip! Hurrah, you beggars!"

Then he said to the hangman:

"Come, Jack, you beggar, let go the jibboom!"

He was cheering, cursing, and huzza'ing when the rope tightened and the drop fell.

So he went out of life, and thus ended a riot that delayed reform for many a day. In that very year (1816), however, Mr. Brougham brought forward his first scheme for national education.

Many years after these riots, Captain Gronow, then member for Stafford, met Orator Hunt, then member for Preston (where he had beaten Mr. Stanley, now Earl of Derby), in the smoking-room of the House of Commons. He mentioned to Hunt that in 1816 he (Captain Gronow) had been sent with a company of the Guards to garrison Coldbath-fields prison, with orders, if any attack were made, to pick off every orator in the cart. Hunt was astonished; his eyes flashed fire.

"What, sir!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say you would really have been capable of such an act of barbarity?"

"Yes," said Gronow; "and I almost regret you did not give us the opportunity, for you wanted that day to create a revolution, and you would have richly deserved the fate you so narrowly escaped by the cowardice or lukewarmness of your followers."

CAPTAIN ANGELO BERTANI.

I WAS in Florence in eighteen hundred and fifty-nine. That was a terribly hot summer all over Europe. In Florence the heat was very great; and I remained in the city all through the dog days, instead of going to make a villeggiatura amongst the hills or by the seaside. For was not that the year of the Austro-Franco-Italian campaign? And did not every lover of Italy feel chained to the focus of news from the seat of war?

Late in September, when the nights were still warm and fine enough to allow of one's enjoying a cigar *al fresco*, I took the habit of going to the Bottegone every evening. The Bottegone is one of the most frequented cafés in Florence. It is in a central part of the city, on the great cathedral square, and in fine weather the pavement before its door is thronged of an evening with drinkers and smokers. For the Piazza del Duomo enjoys the benefit of whatever breeze may be stirring in the city. There is a legend, to the effect that the Devil having made an appointment to meet the wind there, stepped into the cathedral on his way to the rendezvous, having, says the irreverent fable, particular business with some of the canons. The business has detained the Devil ever since. And so, from that day to this, the wind has been wandering up and down on the piazza, vainly expecting to find the Devil.

I was alone in Florence, idle and observant. One young man among the many frequenters of the Bottegone, I noticed for some weeks as a regular visitor. He had a tall, slender, gentlemanlike figure, bright dark southern eyes, and, though dressed in plain clothes, clearly had the bearing of a soldier. He always wore, pressed somewhat low over his brows, a soft felt hat, from which escaped on either side a luxuriant mass of hair, thick and waving, and as blue-black as the raven's wing. The old reason for disliking Dr. Fell is quite as potent, on occasions, for loving Dr. Fell; and, without being able to account for it to myself, I felt a strong attraction towards this young man. Our little tables outside the café stood side by side, and we naturally came to interchange small civilities, such as the proffer of a fusee, the loan of a newspaper, and so on. The first words I heard him utter, betrayed, in their soft, sweet, lisping accents, that he was a Venetian. This circumstance heightened my interest in him, for the sympathy then felt for Venice in Italy was very deep, very tender, and very real.

He responded to my advances, and I came to know him. His name was Angelo Bertani; he was a captain in a regiment of the line, and had distinguished himself at Solferino, where he had received a flesh-wound in the thigh, on which fever and ague had supervened.

His quarters, in Florence, were on a steep bit of hill at the back of the Palazzo Pitti. The first time I made him a visit there, was when he had been laid up for some few days. As I left the more frequented thoroughfares to mount the ascent, a strange sad silence took possession of the street. I might have been many miles away from a crowded city. The moon looked solemnly down on tall stone garden walls, and on the dusky cypress-trees that overtopped them. My measured footsteps echoed sharply on the flagged way. There was no other sound, except, at regular intervals, the peculiarly plaintive short cry of a little *chiù* owl calling to its mate. Arrived at the gate, I entered and mounted a long outer flight of steps, partly covered by arcades, to the first floor of a wide

rambling old palazzo. A soldierly man, with a little brazen oil lamp in his hand, stepped out of a doorway and looked at me.

"You are the servant of the Captain Angelo Bertani?" said I.

"Yes, sir, I am Gabor," was the answer, in good Italian, but with a strong foreign accent.

"How is the captain?"

"Not so well this evening, I fear, signor. He has been much depressed all day."

The old soldier gave me a scrutinising glance, and, seeming to be tolerably well satisfied with his inspection, made a military salute, and preceded me with his lamp along a stone corridor.

I experienced an inexplicable feeling as I walked down the echoing passage. I had no definite expectation; but I felt as though something strange were infallibly about to happen. Nothing at all strange did happen. I found Bertani lying on a sofa in his lofty vaulted room, with a shaded lamp on a little table at his back, and before him the glorious panorama of Florence, framed by the open window, and touched with the broad *chiar'oscuro* of the moonlight.

He received me more than graciously, with somewhat of the warmth of an old acquaintance. As such, indeed, he claimed me on the strength of our frequent meetings at the Bottegone. He looked haggard and suffering, but strikingly handsome, with his pale Titianesque face and black hair relieved by a Greek smoking-cap of crimson silk. I noticed that he wore this cap, as I had always seen him wear his felt hat, low on his brow.

We conversed freely. I asked if his wound were worse? He replied, it was troublesome, but nothing more, except that it reduced his strength terribly, and—combined with many hardships inseparable from his late service, poor food, and not enough of that—caused his nervous system to be much shaken by fever. He was charmed to see me (he assured me several times); he took my visit as a very great kindness; he earnestly hoped that I would soon repeat it; and he said, in the winning Italian manner, that he found me very "*simpatico*," and I did him good.

Little faith as I had in my power to dispel any nervous fancies by which the young Venetian's mind might be secretly troubled, I was too much interested in him not to avail myself most gladly of the chance of improving our acquaintance. It was not long, therefore, before I repeated my visit. I was received with even more cordiality than on the first occasion, and speedily became the intimate friend of Captain Angelo Bertani. Youth forms its friendships rapidly, and there was a most engaging simplicity in Bertani's character. As I came to know him better, I was struck by the singular sweetness and serenity of his temper and manner. I found him uniformly placid and self-possessed. A tinge of melancholy hung about him, but no gloom. And how was it possible, I asked myself, for a patriotic Venetian to be gay and cheerful, when his country was cast back beneath the heel of the Aus-

trian at the moment when all hearts had been beating high with the hope of her deliverance?

"Bertani," said I to him one evening, after we had been sitting silent for a time, "don't you think it would be good for you to make a move southward? Surely, a winter in Naples would do you good."

He smiled very slightly, and answered, "No."

"No? A taste of the sea breeze, well warmed by that southern sun, would set you up again."

He paused a moment, looking full in my face with his liquid bright eyes, and answered, slowly, "Caro mio, the sea breeze and the southern sun would not set me up again—because nothing will ever set me up again."

There was something in the notion of his being a prey to a morbid delusion, which shocked me inexpressibly—shocked me the more, in that his manner and conversation had always impressed me with a high opinion of the limpid clearness, if not the force, of his intellect. I began to try to prove to him the folly and weakness of giving way to a fancy that nothing would restore him. I talked myself into quite an excited state, and only paused at last, not from lack of arguments, but because my eloquence was chilled by his absolute silence and serenity. Bertani sat motionless, with his handsome head leaning back against the old tapestry-covered chair, and a look of patient sweetness on his face, which somehow seemed so incompatible with the weak despondency of which I was accusing him, that I felt ashamed to proceed. "Forgive me," I said, suddenly, "if I presume too far on our brief acquaintance."

"Forgive you?" he cried, and grasped my hand warmly. "My friend, I have nothing to forgive. I thank you, on the contrary, with all my heart. But do not mistake me when I say that nothing will ever set me up again. I do not believe that I shall die immediately. I hope to live yet a few years whilst there is work for my arm to do. When I say that nothing will ever set me up again, I say the simple truth, for all that. I shall never be the man I was—never, never."

He spoke quite placidly, and was even smiling, but there was something in the fixed look of his eye which filled me with an undefined and unaccountable terror.

I suppose he saw my face change, for he rose and stood opposite to me (we had been sitting side by side), saying, "No, no, no, my good friend. It is not *that*. Be at ease. I am as sane as you are. Listen. That you are good and true I do not doubt, and never have doubted since I first saw your face among the crowd at the Bottegone. You have told me since, that you were singularly attracted by me. Well, it was a mutual attraction. If you have the patience to hear me out, I will tell you what I have never yet told any human being. Stay yet a moment. What I have to say is strange beyond all strangeness, perhaps, that you can imagine, but to me it is a deep and solemn reality; and to have it met with a scoff, or even a cold expression of incredulity,

would pain me to the heart without shaking my own conviction by one hair's breadth."

I assured Bertani that I was prepared to listen to what he would tell me with all respect; and after a minute he began:

"I am quite alone in the world. As far as I know, there remains no creature bound to me by ties of relationship. I was an only child. My father was a lawyer, but his practice was very small, and before I was ten years old it had dwindled away altogether, owing to the strong political opinions he held and professed. In the '48' no entreaties could prevent him from shouldering a musket and joining the volunteers, who responded with generous enthusiasm to the call of patriotism from all parts of Italy. He died in the early part of the following year, from the effects of fatigues to which he was unaccustomed, and which his age—for he had married late, and was advanced in years—rendered doubly trying. My mother and I were left literally destitute. In her distress she turned to a distant relative of my poor father's, with whom we had none of us been on speaking terms for many years. This man was a wealthy bachelor. He had been as prosperous in life as my father had been the reverse, and held a high position under the Austrian government in Venice. This alone would have been an unforgivable crime in my father's eyes. Then, besides, Pasquale Rosai—that was my cousin's name—was a bigoted and uncompromising Catholic, and an upholder of the Papacy in its worst and most despotic phases. To this man my mother appealed for help in her forlorn widowhood. I was then a boy between thirteen and fourteen years old, and Rosai offered to undertake the expense of my education, and to provide for my establishment in life, on the condition that he should be permitted to exercise supreme and unlimited authority over me; and that I should be separated from my mother, who was only to visit me at stated periods. Our circumstances were too desperate to permit my mother to hesitate. I was transferred from the gloomy silent dwelling in which my poor father had died, to the wealthy and luxurious home of Pasquale Rosai. I believe this man intended and tried to do his duty by me. But his character was naturally stern and cold, and his narrow intellect warped by the harshest bigotry. I was expected unhesitatingly to accept his dictum upon every subject, and was compelled to listen to the severest condemnation of principles which I had been hitherto taught to hold sacred. You see I had been cradled and brought up in the midst of a circle of people, the chief article of whose creed was hatred of the Austrian. Incredible as it may seem to you, after what I have said, the man I have loved best on this earth belonged to the nation of our detested rulers."

"He was an Austrian?"

"Yes; and I loved him. Ah, mio Dio, loved him! In my guardian's house, though my body was pampered, my heart was starved. My poor mother died within a twelvemonth of my father

and then I was desolate. Under these circumstances, is it surprising that when my cousin one day (I was little more than sixteen years old) announced his intention of sending me to the university at Vienna, I hailed the prospect as an escape from the dreary round of my daily life? I did not fully understand why he should send me to Germany. But I now conjecture that it may have been with a hope of *denationalising* me as much as possible. For he designed me for the law, and it was my ambition to become a soldier in my country's glorious cause. Well, I went to Vienna, and warmth and light were shed into my loveless life by the friendship of Gustav von Hildesheim, a fellow-student. He was to me friend, companion, brother. The truest, noblest, dearest!"

Bertani paused, and covered his eyes with his hand. I sat silent, not venturing to break in upon that sacred grief, even by a word. Presently he resumed, having thanked me for my silent sympathy by holding out his hand with a gesture full of grace and sympathy:

"If I could describe to you what Gustav was!" he said. "It was not merely my boyish love and admiration which invested him with heroic qualities. He was beloved by all who knew him. My elder by four years, the relations between us were, on his side, tender protecting friendship; on mine, gratitude and devotion almost amounting to idolatry. He shone in all studies and accomplishments; surmounting difficulties with an ease which appeared marvellous to my duller brain. And he was ever ready to help me over rough places that I could never have surmounted without his aid. Gustav von Hildesheim belonged to a high and influential family, holding the most orthodox opinions in politics and religion. But the Abbé Walldorf, my priestly Mentor at the university, would have been aghast could he have heard the theories held by this scion of a noble Catholic house. Gustav had caught the infection of liberalism, which was then rife among the youth of Germany, and he had an especial sympathy and admiration for Italy. We used to sit and talk for hours of the future of my beloved Venice, and he confirmed and encouraged all the patriotic hopes and aspirations bequeathed to me by my father. Notice this especially:—he had a peculiar habit of passing his fingers through my hair, so as to raise up the thick curls from my forehead, as he listened to my stories of my father's career, and of our life at home.

"But we talked also of other and higher things. Gustav had a tendency to mysticism, and a national love for the marvellous. I used to listen, awe-struck, to his strange dreamy speculations about a future state, and whether the spirits of the dead were permitted to hold communion with those they had loved while living.

"Nearly three years passed without my once revisiting Italy. I took counsel with Gustav, and, with his concurrence, I wrote explicitly to Rosai, confessing my dislike of, and unfitness for, the profession to which he had destined me,

and begging him to permit me to follow that to which all my inclinations pointed. We awaited his reply anxiously, and meanwhile I had a serious trouble in the prospect of soon parting from Gustav. He had completed his course of study, and was about to leave Vienna for a distant part of the country.

"'I hope, my dear exile,' he said, smilingly, 'that I shall not be called away before your destiny is determined on. What will you do if Rosai should be inflexible?'

"'I have made up my mind what to do,' I answered. 'I shall run away and enlist in the army of the King of Sardinia. If my father were alive, it is what he would counsel.'

"'Enlist, Angelo mio, as a common soldier?'

cried Gustav, stroking my hair in his accustomed manner.

"'Yes,' I answered; 'in that way I shall at least not disgrace myself, either as a man or an Italian.'

"The letter from Vienna came at last, and was more harsh than I had believed possible. Gustav and I held counsel together, deep into the night. On the morrow he was to leave Vienna. Finding my main determination not to be shaken or changed, 'At least,' said he, 'you will not refuse to share my purse for the present. You have told me I am as a brother to you. Do not deny me a brother's right to aid you now.' I hastily considered what was the smallest sum that would take me across the Alps, and then told my friend that I would thankfully accept that sum from him as a loan. We agreed to write to each other, and formed many plans for a speedy meeting. All the manly dignity I tried to summon up, could not repress the tears that gushed forth when Gustav took me in his arms for one last brotherly embrace, and passed his hand through my hair in the old caressing way. I clung to him as a child might cling, and sobbed upon his faithful breast. He cheered and soothed me with high words of hope, and noble aspiration, for the future. 'Heaven bless you, my Angelo! Courage, faith, patience! Remember my prophecy. You will live to see your Venice free and Italian. And we shall meet again—here or hereafter.'

"I never saw him more.

"Next morning, at daybreak, I left Vienna for ever. I reached Turin, and there enlisted in a line regiment as a private soldier. I first saw service in the Crimea. Fortune favoured me, and I was promoted from the ranks.

"I kept up a constant correspondence with Gustav; and, at one time, had great hopes of seeing him, for he wrote me word that he had been recommended to pass a winter in Italy. In the joy of looking forward to having him with me once more, I paid less heed than I should otherwise have done to the hint of ill health which such a recommendation conveyed. He had looked strong, and bright, and blooming; the very incarnation of youthful health. But consumption lurked in his rosy cheek and bright blue eye, and soon the tidings came that a voyage to Egypt

was considered the only chance of baffling the disease. I would have given worlds to see him before he left Europe; but my duty and my poverty combined to keep me at my post.

"The events of '55' and '59' are as familiar to you as to me. I won my company at San Martino. At Solferino—" As Bertani pronounced the word, a deadly pallor whitened his already pale face, and his eyes resumed that fixed gaze which had so startled me.

"—At Solferino my life was saved, thus. I was in the thick of the battle where the fight raged hottest, and I had reached that state of furious excitement in which only the wild beast instinct of destruction seems to animate a man, when I felt a gentle pressure turn my head aside, and I felt ice-cold fingers passed lightly through my hair. At that same instant a bullet whistled past my ear. It passed so close to me that it seemed as if the difference of a hair's breadth would have buried it in my brain. *I knew then, and I know now, that the hand that saved me was Gustav's.* I recognised the touch of that hand, and the peculiar caress I had so often received from it, as instantly and certainly as though my friend had been standing bodily by my side; nor did I need the fatal news that came to me. Within six weeks I received a letter from Madame von Hildesheim, written (these were her words) in compliance with her son's last and most urgent request. *Gustav had died in Egypt, on the very day and at the very hour when I had felt his hand amidst my hair upon the battle-field of Solferino.*"

Bertani's voice thrilled me in every nerve, and I shuddered. "Was that," I asked, "the only occasion on which you have experienced the mysterious touch?"

He answered softly, "I felt it once again when I was lying sick in hospital, with the sabre-cut in my thigh, received that same day of Solferino. How I came by it I know not, for, after the hand had touched me, I remember nothing until I found myself stretched on a hospital pallet, with the surgeon dressing my wound. I got brain fever after that, and was delirious, they tell me. One night as I opened my aching eyes to stare at the dull flicker from the lamp that wavered on the whitewashed ceiling, I felt the cold soft fingers stroke my hair, and immediately a tight hot band of pain seemed loosened from my temples, and I slept. Next day I awoke—weak, it is true, but refreshed and free from fever. My time was not yet come."

"Granted that all this was so," I urged, "why should you despond, and say that you are

never again to be the man you were? This beneficent hand has brought you nothing but good."

"True," returned Bertani, "true. And you rightly call it a beneficent hand. But the next time I feel its touch, it will summon me away, to join my friend in the awful spirit-world."

"Why should you think so?"

"I do not *think* it," he answered. "I know it. I have an assurance within me that the third touch of that dear dead hand will convey my death-signal. Look!" he now added, bending forward; "those spirit-fingers have left a visible trace behind them."

He removed the crimson smoking-cap he always wore, and then I saw, running from brow to crown, in startling contrast with the raven blackness of the rest, one streak of hair about a finger's breadth as white as driven snow.

Towards the end of this present year of grace 1866, when the Italian troops made their entry into Venice, I was there, one of many strangers. Bertani was there too, and I saw him among a brilliant knot of distinguished officers. Next morning, when his servant went to call him, he was found dead in his bed. It was at the moment of my coming up the staircase that Gabor (a Hungarian, and I believe a deserter from the Austrians) rushed out with the cry: "Death, death, death!" upon his lips.

We went into the solemn room together. Captain Angelo Bertani lay peacefully on his pillow, with a smile on his face, and his hair all pushed back from his brow, as if his mother's hand had soothed him to sleep.

I felt a thrill of terror at the sight. But I forebore to speak of the mystery to the Hungarian soldier, and I held the hand of my old friend to my breast in silence.

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BARBOX BROTHERS.

I.

"GUARD! What place is this?"

"Mugby Junction, sir."

"A windy place!"

"Yes, it mostly is, sir."

"And looks comfortless indeed!"

"Yes, it generally does, sir."

"Is it a rainy night still?"

"Pours, sir."

"Open the door. I'll get out."

"You'll have, sir," said the guard, glistening with drops of wet, and looking at the tearful face of his watch by the light of his lantern as the traveller descended, "three minutes here."

"More, I think.—For I am not going on."

"Thought you had a through ticket, sir?"

"So I have, but I shall sacrifice the rest of it. I want my luggage."

"Please to come to the van and point it out, sir. Be good enough to look very sharp, sir. Not a moment to spare."

The guard hurried to the luggage van, and the traveller hurried after him. The guard got into it, and the traveller looked into it.

"Those two large black portmanteaus in the corner where your light shines. Those are mine."

"Name upon 'em, sir?"

"Barbox Brothers."

"Stand clear, sir, if you please. One. Two Right!"

Lamp waved. Signal lights ahead already changing. Shriek from engine. Train gone.

"Mugby Junction!" said the traveller, pulling up the woollen muffler round his throat with both hands. "At past three o'clock of a tempestuous morning! So!"

He spoke to himself. There was no one else to speak to. Perhaps, though there had been any one else to speak to, he would have preferred to speak to himself. Speaking to himself, he

spoke to a man within five years of fifty either way, who had turned grey too soon, like a neglected fire; a man of pondering habit, brooding carriage of the head, and suppressed internal voice; a man with many indications on him of having been much alone.

He stood unnoticed on the dreary platform, except by the rain and by the wind. Those two vigilant assailants made a rush at him. "Very well," said he, yielding. "It signifies nothing to me, to what quarter I turn my face."

Thus, at Mugby Junction, at past three o'clock of a tempestuous morning, the traveller went where the weather drove him.

Not but what he could make a stand when he was so minded, for, coming to the end of the roofed shelter (it is of considerable extent at Mugby Junction) and looking out upon the dark night, with a yet darker spirit-wing of storm beating its wild way through it, he faced about, and held his own as ruggedly in the difficult direction, as he had held it in the easier one. Thus, with a steady step, the traveller went up and down, up and down, up and down, seeking nothing, and finding it.

A place replete with shadowy shapes, this Mugby Junction in the black hours of the four-and-twenty. Mysterious goods trains, covered with palls and gliding on like vast weird funerals, conveying themselves guiltily away from the presence of the few lighted lamps, as if their freight had come to a secret and unlawful end. Half miles of coal pursuing in a Detective manner, following when they lead, stopping when they stop, backing when they back. Red hot embers showering out upon the ground, down this dark avenue, and down the other, as if torturing fires were being raked clear; concurrently, shrieks and groans and grinds invading the ear, as if the tortured were at the height of their suffering. Iron-barred cages full of cattle jangling by midway, the drooping beasts with horns entangled, eyes frozen with terror,

and mouths too: at least they have long icicles (or what seem so) hanging from their lips. Unknown languages in the air, conspiring in red, green, and white, characters. An earthquake accompanied with thunder and lightning, going up express to London. Now, all quiet, all rusty, wind and rain in possession, lamps extinguished, Mugby Junction dead and indistinct, with its robe drawn over its head, like Caesar.

Now, too, as the belated traveller plodded up and down, a shadowy train went by him in the gloom which was no other than the train of a life. From whatsoever intangible deep cutting or dark tunnel it emerged, here it came, unsummoned and unannounced, stealing upon him and passing away into obscurity. Here, mournfully went by, a child who had never had a childhood or known a parent, inseparable from a youth with a bitter sense of his namelessness, coupled to a man the enforced business of whose best years had been distasteful and oppressive, linked to an ungrateful friend, dragging after him a woman once beloved. Attendant, with many a clank and wrench, were lumbering cares, dark meditations, huge dim disappointments, monotonous years, a long jarring line of the discords of a solitary and unhappy existence.

"—Yours, sir?"

The traveller recalled his eyes from the waste into which they had been staring, and fell back a step or so under the abruptness, and perhaps the chance appropriateness, of the question.

"O! My thoughts were not here for the moment. Yes. Yes. Those two portmanteaus are mine. Are you a Porter?"

"On Porter's wages, sir. But I am Lamps."

The traveller looked a little confused.

"Who did you say you are?"

"Lamps, sir," showing an oily cloth in his hand, as further explanation.

"Surely, surely. Is there any hotel or tavern here?"

"Not exactly here, sir. There is a Refreshment Room here, but—" Lamps, with a mighty serious look, gave his head a warning roll that plainly added—"but it's a blessed circumstance for you that it's not open."

"You couldn't recommend it, I see, if it was available?"

"Ask your pardon, sir. If it was—"

"Open?"

"It ain't my place, as a paid servant of the company to give my opinion on any of the company's toepicks," he pronounced it more like toothpicks, "beyond lamp-ile and cottons," returned Lamps, in a confidential tone; "but speaking as a man, I wouldn't recommend my father (if he was to come to life again) to go and try how he'd be treated at the Refreshment Room. Not speaking as a man, no, I would not."

The traveller nodded conviction. "I suppose I can put up in the town? There is a town here?" For the traveller (though a stay-at-home compared with most travellers) had been, like many others, carried on the steam winds and the iron tides through that Junction

before, without having ever, as one might say, gone ashore there.

"O yes, there's a town, sir. Anyways there's town enough to put up in. But," following the glance of the other at his luggage, "this is a very dead time of the night with us, sir. The deadeast time. I might a'most call it our deadeast and buried time."

"No porters about?"

"Well, sir, you see," returned Lamps, confidential again, "they in general goes off with the gas. That's how it is. And they seem to have overlooked you, through your walking to the furdur end of the platform. But in about twelve minutes or so, she may be up."

"Who may be up?"

"The three forty-two, sir. She goes off in a sidin' till the Up X passes, and then she," here an air of hopeful vagueness pervaded Lamps, "does all as lays in her power."

"I doubt if I comprehend the arrangement."

"I doubt if anybody do, sir. She's a Parliamentary, sir. And, you see, a Parliamentary, or a Skirmishun—"

"Do you mean an Excursion?"

"That's it, sir.—A Parliamentary or a Skirmishun, she *most* *does* go off into a sidin'. But when she *can* get a chance, she's whistled out of it, and she's whistled up into doin' all as," Lamps again wore the air of a highly sanguine man who hoped for the best, "all as lays in her power."

He then explained that porters on duty being required to be in attendance on the Parliamentary matron in question, would doubtless turn up with the gas. In the mean time, if the gentleman would not very much object to the smell of lamp-oil, and would accept the warmth of his little room.—The gentleman being by this time very cold, instantly closed with the proposal.

A greasy little cabin it was, suggestive to the sense of smell, of a cabin in a Whaler. But there was a bright fire burning in its rusty grate, and on the floor there stood a wooden stand of newly trimmed and lighted lamps, ready for carriage service. They made a bright show, and their light, and the warmth, accounted for the popularity of the room, as borne witness to by many impressions of velveten trousers on a form by the fire, and many rounded smears and smudges of stooping velveten shoulders on the adjacent wall. Various untidy shelves accommodated a quantity of lamps and oil-cans, and also a fragrant collection of what looked like the pocket-handkerchiefs of the whole lamp family.

As Barbox Brothers (so to call the traveller on the warranty of his luggage) took his seat upon the form, and warmed his now ungloved hands at the fire, he glanced aside at a little deal desk, much blotched with ink, which his elbow touched. Upon it, were some scraps of coarse paper, and a superannuated steel pen in very reduced and gritty circumstances.

From glancing at the scraps of paper, he turned involuntarily to his host, and said, with some roughness:

"Why, you are never a poet, man!"

Lamps had certainly not the conventional appearance of one, as he stood modestly rubbing his squab nose with a handkerchief so exceedingly oily, that he might have been in the act of mistaking himself for one of his charges. He was a spare man of about the Barbox Brothers time of life, with his features whimsically drawn upward as if they were attracted by the roots of his hair. He had a peculiarly shining transparent complexion, probably occasioned by constant oleaginous application; and his attractive hair, being cut short, and being grizzled, and standing straight up on end as if it in its turn were attracted by some invisible magnet above it, the top of his head was not very unlike a lamp-wick.

"But to be sure it's no business of mine," said Barbox Brothers. "That was an impertinent observation on my part. Be what you like."

"Some people, sir," remarked Lamps, in a tone of apology, "are sometimes what they don't like."

"Nobody knows that better than I do," sighed the other. "I have been what I don't like, all my life."

"When I first took, sir," resumed Lamps, "to composing little Comic-Songs-like——"

Barbox Brothers eyed him with great disfavour.

"—To composing little Comic-Songs-like—and what was more hard—to singing 'em afterwards," said Lamps, "it went against the grain at that time, it did indeed."

Something that was not all oil here shining in Lamps's eye, Barbox Brothers withdrew his own a little disconcerted, looked at the fire, and put a foot on the top bar. "Why did you do it, then?" he asked, after a short pause; abruptly enough but in a softer tone. "If you didn't want to do it, why did you do it? Where did you sing them? Public-house?"

To which Mr. Lamps returned the curious reply: "Bedside."

At this moment, while the traveller looked at him for elucidation, Mugby Junction started suddenly, trembled violently, and opened its gas eyes. "She's got up!" Lamps announced, excited. "What lays in her power is sometimes more, and sometimes less; but it's laid in her power to get up to-night, by George!"

The legend "Barbox Brothers" in large white letters on two black surfaces, was very soon afterwards trundling on a truck through a silent street, and, when the owner of the legend had shivered on the pavement half an hour, what time the porter's knocks at the Inn Door knocked up the whole town first, and the Inn last, he groped his way into the close air of a shut-up house, and so groped between the sheets of a shut-up bed that seemed to have been expressly refrigerated for him when last made.

II.

"You remember me, Young Jackson?"

"What do I remember if not you? You are my first remembrance. It was you who told me that was my name. It was you who

told me that on every twentieth of December my life had a penitential anniversary in it called a birthday. I suppose the last communication was truer than the first!"

"What am I like, Young Jackson?"

"You are like a blight all through the year, to me. You hard-lined, thin-lipped, repressive, changeless woman with a wax mask on. You are like the Devil to me; most of all when you teach me religious things, for you make me abhor them."

"You remember me, Mr. Young Jackson?"

In another voice from another quarter.

"Most gratefully, sir. You were the ray of hope and prospering ambition in my life. When I attended your course, I believed that I should come to be a great healer, and I felt almost happy—even though I was still the one boarder in the house with that horrible mask, and ate and drank in silence and constraint with the mask before me, every day. As I had done every, every, every day, through my school-time and from my earliest recollection."

"What am I like, Mr. Young Jackson?"

"You are like a Superior Being to me. You are like Nature beginning to reveal herself to me. I hear you again, as one of the hushed crowd of young men kindling under the power of your presence and knowledge, and you bring into my eyes the only exultant tears that ever stood in them."

"You remember Me, Mr. Young Jackson?"

In a grating voice from quite another quarter.

"Too well. You made your ghostly appearance in my life one day, and announced that its course was to be suddenly and wholly changed. You showed me which was my wearisome seat in the Gallery of Barbox Brothers. (When *they* were, if they ever were, is unknown to me; there was nothing of them but the name when I bent to the ear.) You told me what I was to do, and what to be paid; you told me afterwards, at intervals of years, when I was to sign for the Firm, when I became a partner, when I became the Firm. I know no more of it, or of myself."

"What am I like, Mr. Young Jackson?"

"You are like my father, I sometimes think. You are hard enough and cold enough so to have brought up an unacknowledged son. I see your scanty figure, your close brown suit, and your tight brown wig; but you, too, wear a wax mask to your death. You never by a chance remove it—it never by a chance falls off—and I know no more of you."

Throughout this dialogue, the traveller spoke to himself at his window in the morning, as he had spoken to himself at the Junction overnight. And as he had then looked in the darkness, a man who had turned grey too soon, like a neglected fire: so he now looked in the sunlight, an ashier grey, like a fire which the brightness of the sun put out.

The firm of Barbox Brothers had been some offshoot or irregular branch of the Public Notary and bill-broking tree. It had gained for itself a gripping reputation before the days of Young Jackson, and the reputation had stuck

to it and to him. As he had imperceptibly come into possession of the dim den up in the corner of a court off Lombard-street, on whose grimy windows the inscription Barbox Brothers had for many long years daily interposed itself between him and the sky, so he had insensibly found himself a personage held in chronic distrust, whom it was essential to screw tight to every transaction in which he engaged, whose word was never to be taken without his attested bond, whom all dealers with openly set up guards and wards against. This character had come upon him through no act of his own. It was as if the original Barbox had stretched himself down upon the office-floor, and had thither caused to be conveyed Young Jackson in his sleep, and had there effected a metempsychosis and exchange of persons with him. The discovery—aided in its turn by the deceit of the only woman he had ever loved, and the deceit of the only friend he had ever made: who eloped from him to be married together—the discovery, so followed up, completed what his earliest rearing had begun. He shrank, abashed, within the form of Barbox, and lifted up his head and heart no more.

But he did at last effect one great release in his condition. He broke the oar he had plied so long, and he scuttled and sank the galley. He prevented the gradual retirement of an old conventional business from him, by taking the initiative and retiring from it. With enough to live on (though after all with not too much), he obliterated the firm of Barbox Brothers from the pages of the Post-office Directory and the face of the earth, leaving nothing of it but its name on two portmanteaus.

"For one must have some name in going about, for people to pick up," he explained to Mugby High-street, through the Inn-window, "and that name at least was real once. Whereas, Young Jackson!—Not to mention its being a sadly satirical misnomer for Old Jackson."

He took up his hat and walked out, just in time to see, passing along on the opposite side of the way, a velvetene man, carrying his day's dinner in a small bundle that might have been larger without suspicion of gluttony, and pelting away towards the Junction at a great pace.

"There's Lamps!" said Barbox Brothers. "And by-the-by—"

Ridiculous, surely, that a man so serious, so self-contained, and not yet three days emancipated from a routine of drudgery, should stand rubbing his chin in the street, in a brown study about Comic Songs.

"Bedside?" said Barbox Brothers, testily. "Sings them at the bedside? Why at the bedside, unless he goes to bed drunk? Does, I shouldn't wonder. But it's no business of mine. Let me see. Mugby Junction, Mugby Junction. Where shall I go next? As it came into my head last night when I woke from an uneasy sleep in the carriage and found myself here, I can go anywhere from here. Where shall I go? I'll go and look at the Junction by daylight. There's no hurry, and I may like the look of one Line better than another."

But there were so many Lines. Gazing down upon them from a bridge at the Junction, it was as if the concentrating Companies formed a great Industrial Exhibition of the works of extraordinary ground-spiders that spun iron. And then so many of the Lines went such wonderful ways, so crossing and curving among one another, that the eye lost them. And then some of them appeared to start with the fixed intention of going five hundred miles, and all of a sudden gave it up at an insignificant barrier, or turned off into a workshop. And then others, like intoxicated men, went a little way very straight, and surprisingly slued round and came back again. And then others were so chock-full of trucks of coal, others were so blocked with trucks of casks, others were so gorged with trucks of ballast, others were so set apart for wheeled objects like immense iron cotton-reels: while others were so bright and clear, and others were so delivered over to rust and ashes and idle wheelbarrows out of work, with their legs in the air (looking much like their masters on strike), that there was no beginning, middle, or end, to the bewilderment.

Barbox Brothers stood puzzled on the bridge, passing his right hand across the lines on his forehead, which multiplied while he looked down, as if the railway Lines were getting themselves photographed on that sensitive plate. Then, was heard a distant ringing of bells and blowing of whistles. Then, puppet-looking heads of men popped out of boxes in perspective, and popped in again. Then, prodigious wooden razors set up on end, began shaving the atmosphere. Then, several locomotive engines in several directions began to scream and be agitated. Then, along one avenue a train came in. Then, along another two trains appeared that didn't come in, but stopped without. Then, bits of trains broke off. Then, a struggling horse became involved with them. Then, the locomotives shared the bits of trains, and ran away with the whole.

"I have not made my next move much clearer by this. No hurry. No need to make up my mind to-day, or to-morrow, nor yet the day after. I'll take a walk."

It fell out somehow (perhaps he meant it should) that the walk tended to the platform at which he had alighted, and to Lamps's room. But Lamps was not in his room. A pair of velvetene shoulders were adapting themselves to one of the impressions on the wall by Lamps's fireplace, but otherwise the room was void. In passing back to get out of the station again, he learnt the cause of this vacancy, by catching sight of Lamps on the opposite line of railway, skipping along the top of a train, from carriage to carriage, and catching lighted namesakes thrown up to him by a coadjutor.

"He is busy. He has not much time for composing or singing Comic Songs this morning, I take it."

The direction he pursued now, was into the country, keeping very near to the side of one great Line of railway, and within easy view of others. "I have half a mind," he said, glancing around, "to settle the question from this point,

by saying, 'I'll take this set of rails, or that, or t'other, and stick to it.' They separate themselves from the confusion, out here, and go their ways."

Ascending a gentle hill of some extent, he came to a few cottages. There, looking about him as a very reserved man might who had never looked about him in his life before, he saw some six or eight young children come merrily trooping and whooping from one of the cottages, and disperse. But not until they had all turned at the little garden gate, and kissed their hands to a face at the upper window: a low window enough, although the upper, for the cottage had but a story of one room above the ground.

Now, that the children should do this was nothing; but that they should do this to a face lying on the sill of the open window, turned towards them in a horizontal position, and apparently only a face, was something noticeable. He looked up at the window again. Could only see a very fragile though a very bright face, lying on one cheek on the window-sill. The delicate smiling face of a girl or woman. Framed in long bright brown hair, round which was tied a light blue band or fillet, passing under the chin.

He walked on, turned back, passed the window again, shyly glanced up again. No change. He struck off by a winding branch-road at the top of the hill—which he must otherwise have descended—kept the cottages in view, worked his way round at a distance so as to come out once more into the main road and be obliged to pass the cottages again. The face still lay on the window-sill, but not so much inclined towards him. And now there were a pair of delicate hands too. They had the action of performing on some musical instrument, and yet it produced no sound that reached his ears.

"Mugby Junction must be the maddest place in England," said Barbox Brothers, pursuing his way down the hill. "The first thing I find here is a Railway Porter who composes comic songs to sing at his bedside. The second thing I find here is a face, and a pair of hands playing a musical instrument that *don't* play!"

The day was a fine bright day in the early beginning of November, the air was clear and inspiriting, and the landscape was rich in beautiful colours. The prevailing colours in the court off Lombard-street, London city, had been few and sombre. Sometimes, when the weather elsewhere was very bright indeed, the dwellers in those tents enjoyed a pepper-and-salt-coloured day or two, but their atmosphere's usual wear was slate, or snuff colour.

He relished his walk so well, that he repeated it next day. He was a little earlier at the cottage than on the day before, and he could hear the children up-stairs singing to a regular measure and clapping out the time with their hands.

"Still, there is no sound of any musical instrument," he said, listening at the corner,

"and yet I saw the performing hands again, as I came by. What are the children singing? Why, good Lord, they can never be singing the multiplication-table!"

They were though, and with infinite enjoyment. The mysterious face had a voice attached to it which occasionally led or set the children right. Its musical cheerfulness was delightful. The measure at length stopped, and was succeeded by a murmuring of young voices, and then by a short song which he made out to be about the current month of the year, and about what work it yielded to the labourers in the fields and farm-yards. Then, there was a stir of little feet, and the children came trooping and whooping out, as on the previous day. And again, as on the previous day, they all turned at the garden gate, and kissed their hands—evidently to the face on the window-sill, though Barbox Brothers from his retired post of disadvantage at the corner could not see it.

But as the children dispersed, he cut off one small straggler—a brown-faced boy with flaxen hair—and said to him:

"Come here, little one. Tell me whose house is that?"

The child, with one swarthy arm held up across his eyes, half in shyness, and half ready for defence, said from behind the inside of his elbow:

"Phœbe's."

"And who," said Barbox Brothers, quite as much embarrassed by his part in the dialogue as the child could possibly be by his, "is Phœbe?"

To which the child made answer: "Why, Phœbe, of course."

The small but sharp observer had eyed his questioner closely, and had taken his moral measure. He lowered his guard, and rather assumed a tone with him: as having discovered him to be an unaccustomed person in the art of polite conversation.

"Phœbe," said the child, "can't be anybobby else but Phœbe. Can she?"

"No, I suppose not."

"Well," returned the child, "then why did you ask me?"

Deeming it prudent to shift his ground, Barbox Brothers took up a new position.

"What do you do there? Up there in that room where the open window is. What do you do there?"

"Cool," said the child.

"Eh?"

"Co-o-ol," the child repeated in a louder voice, lengthening out the word with a fixed look and great emphasis, as much as to say:

"What's the use of your having grown up, if you're such a donkey as not to understand me?"

"Ah! School, school," said Barbox Brothers. "Yes, yes, yes. And Phœbe teaches you?"

The child nodded.

"Good boy."

"Tound it out, have you?" said the child.

"Yes, I have found it out. What would you do with twopence, if I gave it you?"

"Pend it."

The knock-down promptitude of this reply leaving him not a leg to stand upon, Barbox Brothers produced the twopence with great lameness, and withdrew in a state of humiliation.

But, seeing the face on the window-sill as he passed the cottage, he acknowledged its presence there with a gesture, which was not a nod, not a bow, not a removal of his hat from his head, but was a diffident compromise between or struggle with all three. The eyes in the face seemed amused, or cheered, or both, and the lips modestly said: "Good day to you, sir."

"I find I must stick for a time to Mugby Junction," said Barbox Brothers, with much gravity, after once more stopping on his return road to look at the Lines where they went their several ways so quietly. "I can't make up my mind yet, which iron road to take. In fact, I must get a little accustomed to the Junction before I can decide."

So, he announced at the Inn that he was "going to stay on, for the present," and improved his acquaintance with the Junction that night, and again next morning, and again next night and morning: going down to the station, mingling with the people there, looking about him down all the avenues of railway, and beginning to take an interest in the incomings and outgoings of the trains. At first, he often put his head into Lamps's little room, but he never found Lamps there. A pair or two of velvet-covered shoulders he usually found there, stooping over the fire, sometimes in connexion with a clasped knife and a piece of bread and meat; but the answer to his inquiry, "Where's Lamps?" was, either that he was "t'other side the line," or, that it was his off-time, or (in the latter case), his own personal introduction to another Lamps who was not his Lamps. However, he was not so desperately set upon seeing Lamps now, but he bore the disappointment. Nor did he so wholly devote himself to his severe application to the study of Mugby Junction, as to neglect exercise. On the contrary, he took a walk every day, and always the same walk. But the weather turned cold and wet again, and the window was never open.

III.

At length, after a lapse of some days, there came another streak of fine bright hardy autumn weather. It was a Saturday. The window was open, and the children were gone. Not surprising, this, for he had patiently watched and waited at the corner, until they were gone.

"Good day," he said to the face; absolutely getting his hat clear off his head this time.

"Good day to you, sir."

"I am glad you have a fine sky again, to look at."

"Thank you, sir. It is kind of you."

"You are an invalid, I fear?"

"No, sir. I have very good health."

"But are you not always lying down?"

"O yes, I am always lying down, because I cannot sit up. But I am not an invalid."

The laughing eyes seemed highly to enjoy his great mistake.

"Would you mind taking the trouble to come in, sir? There is a beautiful view from this window. And you would see that I am not at all ill—being so good as to care."

It was said to help him, as he stood irresolute, but evidently desiring to enter, with his diffident hand on the latch of the garden gate. It did help him, and he went in.

The room up-stairs was a very clean white room with a low roof. Its only inmate lay on a couch that brought her face to a level with the window. The couch was white too; and her simple dress or wrapper being light blue, like the band around her hair, she had an ethereal look, and a fanciful appearance of lying among clouds. He felt that she instinctively perceived him to be by habit a downcast taciturn man; it was another help to him to have established that understanding so easily, and got it over.

There was an awkward constraint upon him, nevertheless, as he touched her hand, and took a chair at the side of her couch.

"I see now," he began, not at all fluently, "how you occupy your hands. Only seeing you from the path outside, I thought you were playing upon something."

She was engaged in very nimbly and dexterously making lace. A lace-pillow lay upon her breast; and the quick movements and changes of her hands upon it as she worked, had given them the action he had misinterpreted.

"That is curious," she answered, with a bright smile. "For I often fancy, myself, that I play tunes while I am at work."

"Have you any musical knowledge?"

She shook her head.

"I think I could pick out tunes, if I had any instrument, which could be made as handy to me as my lace-pillow. But I dare say I deceive myself. At all events, I shall never know."

"You have a musical voice. Excuse me; I have heard you sing."

"With the children?" she answered, slightly colouring. "O yes. I sing with the dear children, if it can be called singing."

Barbox Brothers glanced at the two small forms in the room, and hazarded the speculation that she was fond of children, and that she was learned in new systems of teaching them? "Very fond of them," she said, shaking her head again; "but I know nothing of teaching, beyond the interest I have in it, and the pleasure it gives me when they learn. Perhaps your overhearing my little scholars sing some of their lessons, has led you so far astray as to think me a grand teacher? Ah! I thought so! No, I have only read and been told about that system. It seemed so pretty and pleasant, and to treat them so like the merry Robins they are, that I took up with it in my little way. You don't need to be told what a very little way mine is, sir," she added, with a glance at the small forms and round the room.

All this time her hands were busy at her lace-pillow. As they still continued so, and as there was a kind of substitute for conversation in the click and play of its pegs, Barbox Brothers took the opportunity of observing her. He guessed her to be thirty. The charm of her transparent face and large bright brown eyes, was, not that they were passively resigned, but that they were actively and thoroughly cheerful. Even her busy hands, which of their own thinness alone might have besought compassion, plied their task with a gay courage that made mere compassion an unjustifiable assumption of superiority, and an impertinence.

He saw her eyes in the act of rising towards his, and he directed his towards the prospect, saying: "Beautiful indeed!"

"Most beautiful, sir. I have sometimes had a fancy that I would like to sit up, for once, only to try how it looks to an erect head. But what a foolish fancy that would be to encourage! It cannot look more lovely to any one than it does to me."

Her eyes were turned to it as she spoke, with most delighted admiration and enjoyment. There was not a trace in it of any sense of deprivation.

"And those threads of railway, with their puffs of smoke and steam changing places so fast, make it so lively for me," she went on. "I think of the number of people who *can* go where they wish, on their business, or their pleasure; I remember that the puffs make signs to me that they are actually going while I look; and that enlivens the prospect with abundance of company, if I want company. There is the great Junction, too. I don't see it under the foot of the hill, but I can very often hear it, and I always know it is there. It seems to join me, in a way, to I don't know how many places and things that I shall never see."

With an abashed kind of idea that it might have already joined himself to something he had never seen, he said constrainedly: "Just so."

"And so you see, sir," pursued Phoebe, "I am not the invalid you thought me, and I am very well off indeed."

"You have a happy disposition," said Barbox Brothers: perhaps with a slight excusatory touch for his own disposition.

"Ah! But you should know my father," she replied. "His is the happy disposition!—Don't mind, sir!" For his reserve took the alarm at a step upon the stairs, and he distrusted that he would be set down for a troublesome intruder. "This is my father coming."

The door opened, and the father paused there.

"Why, Lamps!" exclaimed Barbox Brothers, starting from his chair. "How do you do, Lamps?"

To which, Lamps responded: "The gentleman for Nowhere! How do you do, sir?"

And they shook hands, to the greatest admiration and surprise of Lamps's daughter.

"I have looked you up, half a dozen times since that night," said Barbox Brothers, "but have never found you."

"So I've heard on, sir, so I've heard on," returned Lamps. "It's your being noticed so often down at the Junction, without taking any train, that has begun to get you the name among us of the gentleman for Nowhere. No offence in my having called you by it when took by surprise, I hope, sir?"

"None at all. It's as good a name for me as any other you could call me by. But may I ask you a question in the corner here?"

Lamps suffered himself to be led aside from his daughter's couch, by one of the buttons of his velveteen jacket.

"Is this the bedside where you sing your songs?"

Lamps nodded.

The gentleman for Nowhere clapped him on the shoulder, and they faced about again.

"Upon my word, my dear," said Lamps then to his daughter, looking from her to her visitor, "it is such an amaze to me, to find you brought acquainted with this gentleman, that I must (if this gentleman will excuse me) take a rounder."

Mr. Lamps demonstrated in action what this meant, by pulling out his oily handkerchief rolled up in the form of a ball, and giving himself an elaborate smear, from behind the right ear, up the cheek, across the forehead, and down the other cheek to behind his left ear. After this operation, he shone exceedingly.

"It's according to my custom when particular warmed up by any agitation, sir," he offered by way of apology. "And really, I am thrown into that state of amaze by finding you brought acquainted with Phoebe, that I—that I think I will, if you'll excuse me, take another rounder." Which he did, seeming to be greatly restored by it.

They were now both standing by the side of her couch, and she was working at her lace-pillow. "Your daughter tells me," said Barbox Brothers, still in a half reluctant shamefaced way, "that she never sits up."

"No, sir, nor never has done. You see, her mother (who died when she was a year and two months old) was subject to very bad fits, and as she had never mentioned to me that she *was* subject to fits, they couldn't be guarded against. Consequently, she dropped the baby when took, and this happened."

"It was very wrong of her," said Barbox Brothers, with a knitted brow, "to marry you, making a secret of her infirmity."

"Well, sir," pleaded Lamps, in behalf of the long-deceased. "You see, Phoebe and me, we have talked that over too. And Lord bless us! Such a number on us has our infirmities, what with fits, and what with misfits, of one sort and another, that if we confessed to 'em all before we got married, most of us might never get married."

"Might not that be for the better?"

"Not in this case, sir," said Phoebe, giving her hand to her father.

"No, not in this case, sir," said her father, patting it between his own.

"You correct me," returned Barbox Brothers, with a blush; "and I must look so like a Brute,

that at all events it would be superfluous in me to confess to *that* infirmity. I wish you would tell me a little more about yourselves. I hardly know how to ask it of you, for I am conscious that I have a bad stiff manner, a dull discouraging way with me, but I wish you would."

"With all our hearts, sir," returned Lamps, gaily, for both. "And first of all, that you may know my name—"

"Stay!" interposed the visitor, with a slight flush. "What signifies your name! Lamps is name enough for me. I like it. It is bright and expressive. What do I want more!"

"Why to be sure, sir," returned Lamps. "I have in general no other name down at the Junction; but I thought, on account of your being here as a first-class single, in a private character, that you might—"

The visitor waved the thought away with his hand, and Lamps acknowledged the mark of confidence by taking another rounder.

"You are hard-worked, I take for granted?" said Barbox Brothers, when the subject of the rounder came out of it much dirtier than he went into it.

Lamps was beginning, "Not particular so"—when his daughter took him up.

"O yes, sir, he is very hard-worked. Fourteen, fifteen, eighteen, hours a day. Sometimes twenty-four hours at a time."

"And you," said Barbox Brothers, "what with your school, Phoebe, and what with your lace-making—"

"But my school is a pleasure to me," she interrupted, opening her brown eyes wider, as if surprised to find him so obtuse. "I began it when I was but a child, because it brought me and other children into company, don't you see? *That* was not work. I carry it on still, because it keeps children about me. *That* is not work. I do it as love, not as work. Then my lace-pillow;" her busy hands had stopped, as if her argument required all her cheerful earnestness, but now went on again at the name; "it goes with my thoughts when I think, and it goes with my tunes when I hum any, and *that's* not work. Why, you yourself thought it was music, you know, sir. And so it is, to me."

"Everything is!" cried Lamps, radiantly.

"Everything is music to her, sir."

"My father is, at any rate," said Phoebe, exultingly pointing her thin forefinger at him. "There is more music in my father than there is in a brass band."

"I say! My dear! It's very fillylillially done, you know; but you are flattering your father," he protested, sparkling.

"No I am not, sir, I assure you. No I am not. If you could hear my father sing, you would know I am not. But you never will hear him sing, because he never sings to any one but me. However tired he is, he always sings to me when he comes home. When I lay here long ago, quite a poor little broken doll, he used to sing to me. More than that, he used to make songs, bringing in whatever little

jokes we had between us. More than that, he often does so to this day. O! I'll tell of you, father, as the gentleman has asked about you. He is a poet, sir."

"I shouldn't wish the gentleman, my dear," observed Lamps, for the moment turning grave, "to carry away that opinion of your father, because it might look as if I was given to asking the stars in a molloncolly manner what they was up to. Which I wouldn't at once waste the time, and take the liberty, my dear."

"My father," resumed Phoebe, amending her text, "is always on the bright side, and the good side. You told me just now, I had a happy disposition. How can I help it?"

"Well; but my dear," returned Lamps argumentatively, "how can I help it? Put it to yourself, sir. Look at her. Always as you see her now. Always working—and after all, sir, for but a very few shillings a week—always contented, always lively, always interested in others, of all sorts. I said, this moment, she was always as you see her now. So she is, with a difference that comes to much the same. For, when it's my Sunday off and the morning bells have done ringing, I hear the prayers and thanks read in the touchingest way, and I have the hymns sung to me—so soft, sir, that you couldn't hear 'em out of this room—in notes that seem to me, I am sure, to come from Heaven and go back to it."

It might have been merely through the association of these words with their sacredly quiet time, or it might have been through the larger association of the words with the Redeemer's presence beside the bedridden; but here her dexterous fingers came to a stop on the lace-pillow, and clasped themselves around his neck as he bent down. There was great natural sensibility in both father and daughter, the visitor could easily see; but each made it, for the other's sake, retiring, not demonstrative; and perfect cheerfulness, intuitive or acquired, was either the first or second nature of both. In a very few moments, Lamps was taking another rounder with his comical features beaming, while Phoebe's laughing eyes (just a glistening speck or so upon their lashes) were again directed by turns to him, and to her work, and to Barbox Brothers.

"When my father, sir," she said brightly, "tells you about my being interested in other people even though they know nothing about me—which, by-the-by, I told you myself—you ought to know how that comes about. That's my father's doing."

"No, it isn't!" he protested.

"Don't you believe him, sir; yes, it is. He tells me of everything he sees down at his work. You would be surprised what a quantity he gets together for me, every day. He looks into the carriages, and tells me how the ladies are dressed—so that I know all the fashions! He looks into the carriages, and tells me what pairs of lovers he sees, and what new-married couples on their wedding trip—so that I know all about that! He collects chance newspapers and books

—so that I have plenty to read! He tells me about the sick people who are travelling to try to get better—so that I know all about them! In short, as I began by saying, he tells me everything he sees and makes out, down at his work, and you can't think what a quantity he does see and make out."

"As to collecting newspapers and books, my dear," said Lamps, "it's clear I can have no merit in that, because they're not my perquisites. You see, sir, it's this way: A Guard, he'll say to me, 'Hallo, here you are, Lamps. I've saved this paper for your daughter. How is she going on?' A Head-Porter, he'll say to me, 'Here! Catch hold, Lamps. Here's a couple of wolumes for your daughter. Is she pretty much where she were?' And that's what makes it double welcome, you see. If she had a thousand pound in a box, they wouldn't trouble themselves about her; but being what she is—that is, you understand," Lamps added, somewhat hurriedly, "not having a thousand pound in a box—they take thought for her. And as concerning the young pairs, married and unmarried, it's only natural I should bring home what little I can about *them*, seeing that there's not a Couple of either sort in the neighbourhood that don't come of their own accord to confide in Phoebe."

She raised her eyes triumphantly to Barbox Brothers, as she said:

"Indeed, sir, that is true. If I could have got up and gone to church, I don't know how often I should have been a bridesmaid. But if I could have done that, some girls in love might have been jealous of me, and as it is, no girl is jealous of me. And my pillow would not have been half as ready to put the piece of cake under, as I always find it," she added, turning her face on it with a light sigh, and a smile at her father.

The arrival of a little girl, the biggest of the scholars, now led to an understanding on the part of Barbox Brothers, that she was the domestic of the cottage, and had come to take active measures in it, attended by a pail that might have extinguished her, and a broom three times her height. He therefore rose to take his leave, and took it; saying that if Phoebe had no objection, he would come again.

He had muttered that he would come "in the course of his walks." The course of his walks must have been highly favourable to his return, for he returned after an interval of a single day.

"You thought you would never see me any more, I suppose?" he said to Phoebe as he touched her hand, and sat down by her couch.

"Why should I think so?" was her surprised rejoinder.

"I took it for granted you would mistrust me."

"For granted, sir? Have you been so much mistrusted?"

"I think I am justified in answering yes. But I may have mistrusted too, on my part.

No matter just now. We were speaking of the Junction last time. I have passed hours there since the day before yesterday."

"Are you now the gentleman for Somewhere?" she asked with a smile.

"Certainly for Somewhere; but I don't yet know Where. You would never guess what I am travelling from. Shall I tell you? I am travelling from my birthday."

Her hands stopped in her work, and she looked at him with incredulous astonishment.

"Yes," said Barbox Brothers, not quite easy in his chair, "from my birthday. I am, to myself, an unintelligible book with the earlier chapters all torn out, and thrown away. My childhood had no grace of childhood, my youth had no charm of youth, and what can be expected from such a lost beginning?" His eyes meeting hers as they were addressed intently to him, something seemed to stir within his breast, whispering: "Was this bed a place for the graces of childhood and the charms of youth to take to, kindly? O shame, shame!"

"It is a disease with me," said Barbox Brothers, checking himself, and making as though he had a difficulty in swallowing something, "to go wrong about that. I don't know how I came to speak of that. I hope it is because of an old misplaced confidence in one of your sex involving an old bitter treachery. I don't know. I am all wrong together."

Her hands quietly and slowly resumed their work. Glancing at her, he saw that her eyes were thoughtfully following them.

"I am travelling from my birthday," he resumed, "because it has always been a dreary day to me. My first free birthday coming round some five or six weeks hence, I am travelling to put its predecessors far behind me, and to try to crush the day—or, at all events, put it out of my sight—by heaping new objects on it."

As he paused, she looked at him; but only shook her head as being quite at a loss.

"This is unintelligible to your happy disposition," he pursued, abiding by his former phrase as if there were some lingering virtue of self-defence in it: "I knew it would be, and am glad it is. However, on this travel of mine (in which I mean to pass the rest of my days, having abandoned all thought of a fixed home), I stopped, as you heard from your father, at the Junction here. The extent of its ramifications quite confused me as to whither I should go, from here. I have not yet settled, being still perplexed among so many roads. What do you think I mean to do? How many of the branching roads can you see from your window?"

"Looking out, full of interest, she answered, "Seven."

"Seven," said Barbox Brothers, watching her with a grave smile. "Well! I propose to myself, at once to reduce the gross number to those very seven, and gradually to fine them down to one—the most promising for me—and to take that."

"But how will you know, sir, which *is* the most promising?" she asked, with her brightened eyes roving over the view.

"Ah!" said Barbox Brothers, with another grave smile, and considerably improving in his ease of speech. "To be sure. In this way. Where your father can pick up so much every day for a good purpose, I may once and again pick up a little for an indifferent purpose. The gentleman for Nowhere must become still better known at the Junction. He shall continue to explore it, until he attaches something that he has seen, heard, or found out, at the head of each of the seven roads, to the road itself. And so his choice of a road shall be determined by his choice among his discoveries."

Her hands still busy, she again glanced at the prospect, as if it comprehended something that had not been in it before, and laughed as if it yielded her new pleasure.

"But I must not forget," said Barbox Brothers, "(having got so far) to ask a favour. I want your help in this expedient of mine. I want to bring you what I pick up at the heads of the seven roads that you lie here looking out at, and to compare notes with you about it. May I?—They say two heads are better than one. I should say myself that probably depends upon the heads concerned. But I am quite sure, though we are so newly acquainted, that your head and your father's have found out better things, Phoebe, than ever mine of itself discovered."

She gave him her sympathetic right hand, in perfect rapture with his proposal, and eagerly and gratefully thanked him.

"That's well!" said Barbox Brothers. "Again I must not forget (having got so far) to ask a favour. Will you shut your eyes?"

Laughing playfully at the strange nature of the request, she did so.

"Keep them shut," said Barbox Brothers, going softly to the door, and coming back. "You are on your honour, mind, not to open your eyes until I tell you that you may?"

"Yes! On my honour."

"Good. May I take your lace-pillow from you for a minute?"

Still laughing and wondering, she removed her hands from it, and he put it aside.

"Tell me. Did you see the puffs of smoke and steam made by the morning fast-train yesterday on road number seven from here?"

"Behind the elm-trees and the spire?"

"That's the road," said Barbox Brothers, directing his eyes towards it.

"Yes. I watched them melt away."

"Anything unusual in what they expressed?"

"No!" she answered, merrily.

"Not complimentary to me, for I was in that train. I went—don't open your eyes—to fetch you this, from the great ingenious town. It is not half so large as your lace-pillow, and lies easily and lightly in its place. These little keys are like the keys of a miniature piano, and you supply the air required with your left hand. May you pick out delightful music from it, my

dear! For the present—you can open your eyes now—good-bye!"

In his embarrassed way, he closed the door upon himself, and only saw, in doing so, that she ecstatically took the present to her bosom and caressed it. The glimpse gladdened his heart, and yet saddened it; for so might she, if her youth had flourished in its natural course, have taken to her breast that day the slumbering music of her own child's voice.

BARBOX BROTHERS AND CO.

With good will and earnest purpose, the gentleman for Nowhere began, on the very next day, his researches at the heads of the seven roads. The results of his researches, as he and Phoebe afterwards set them down in fair writing, hold their due places in this veracious chronicle, from its seventeenth page, onward. But they occupied a much longer time in the getting together than they ever will in the perusal. And this is probably the case with most reading matter, except when it is of that highly beneficial kind (for Posterity) which is "thrown off in a few moments of leisure" by the superior poetic geniuses who scorn to take prose pains.

It must be admitted, however, that Barbox by no means hurried himself. His heart being in his work of good-nature, he revelled in it. There was the joy, too (it was a true joy to him), of sometimes sitting by, listening to Phoebe as she picked out more and more discourse from her musical instrument, and as her natural taste and ear refined daily upon her first discoveries. Besides being a pleasure, this was an occupation, and in the course of weeks it consumed hours. It resulted that his dreaded birthday was close upon him before he had troubled himself any more about it.

The matter was made more pressing by the unforeseen circumstance that the councils held (at which Mr. Lamps, beaming most brilliantly, on a few rare occasions assisted) respecting the road to be selected, were, after all, in no wise assisted by his investigations. For, he had connected this interest with this road, or that interest with the other, but could deduce no reason from it for giving any road the preference. Consequently, when the last council was holden, that part of the business stood, in the end, exactly where it had stood in the beginning.

"But, sir," remarked Phoebe, "we have only six roads after all. Is the seventh road dumb?"

"The seventh road? O!" said Barbox Brothers, rubbing his chin. "That is the road I took, you know, when I went to get your little present. That is *its* story, Phoebe."

"Would you mind taking that road again, sir?" she asked with hesitation.

"Not in the least; it is a great high road after all."

"I should like you to take it," returned Phoebe, with a persuasive smile, "for the love of that little present which must ever be so dear to me. I should like you to take it, because

that road can never be again, like any other road to me. I should like you to take it, in remembrance of your having done me so much good: of your having made me so much happier! If you leave me by the road you travelled when you went to do me this great kindness," sounding a faint chord as she spoke, "I shall feel, lying here watching at my window, as if it must conduct you to a prosperous end, and bring you back some day."

"It shall be done, my dear; it shall be done."

So at last the gentleman for Nowhere took a ticket for Somewhere, and his destination was the great ingenious town.

He had loitered so long about the Junction that it was the eighteenth of December when he left it. "High time," he reflected, as he seated himself in the train, "that I started in earnest! Only one clear day remains between me and the day I am running away from. I'll push onward for the hill-country to-morrow. I'll go to Wales."

It was with some pains that he placed before himself the undeniable advantages to be gained in the way of novel occupation for his senses from misty mountains, swollen streams, rain, cold, a wild seashore, and rugged roads. And yet he scarcely made them out as distinctly as he could have wished. Whether the poor girl, in spite of her new resource, her music, would have any feeling of loneliness upon her now—just at first—that she had not had before; whether she saw those very puffs of steam and smoke that he saw, as he sat in the train thinking of her; whether her face would have any pensive shadow on it as they died out of the distant view from her window; whether, in telling him he had done her so much good, she had not unconsciously corrected his old moody bemoaning of his station in life, by setting him thinking that a man might be a great healer, if he would, and yet not be a great doctor; these and other similar meditations got between him and his Welsh picture. There was within him, too, that dull sense of vacuity which follows separation from an object of interest, and cessation of a pleasant pursuit; and this sense, being quite new to him, made him restless. Further, in losing Mugby Junction he had found himself again; and he was not the more enamoured of himself for having lately passed his time in better company.

But surely, here not far ahead, must be the great ingenious town. This crashing and clashing that the train was undergoing, and this coupling on to it of a multitude of new echoes, could mean nothing less than approach to the great station. It did mean nothing less. After some stormy flashes of town lightning, in the way of swift revelations of red-brick blocks of houses, high red-brick chimney-shafts, vistas of red-brick railway arches, tongues of fire, blots of smoke, valleys of canal, and hills of coal, there came the thundering in at the journey's end.

Having seen his portmanteaus safely housed in the hotel he chose, and having appointed his

dinner-hour, Barbox Brothers went out for a walk in the busy streets. And now it began to be suspected by him that Mugby Junction was a Junction of many branches, invisible as well as visible, and had joined him to an endless number of byways. For, whereas he would, but a little while ago, have walked these streets blindly brooding, he now had eyes and thoughts for a new external world. How the many toiling people lived, and loved, and died; how wonderful it was to consider the various trainings of eye and hand, the nice distinctions of sight and touch, that separated them into classes of workers, and even into classes of workers at subdivisions of one complete whole which combined their many intelligences and forces, though of itself but some cheap object of use or ornament in common life; how good it was to know that such assembling in a multitude on their part, and such contribution of their several dexterities towards a civilising end, did not deteriorate them as it was the fashion of the supercilious Mayflies of humanity to pretend, but engendered among them a self-respect and yet a modest desire to be much wiser than they were (the first evinced in their well-balanced bearing and manner of speech when he stopped to ask a question; the second, in the announcements of their popular studies and amusements on the public walls); these considerations, and a host of such, made his walk a memorable one. "I too am but a little part of a great whole," he began to think; "and to be serviceable to myself and others, or to be happy, I must cast my interest into, and draw it out of, the common stock."

Although he had arrived at his journey's end for the day by noon, he had since insensibly walked about the town so far and so long that the lamplighters were now at their work in the streets, and the shops were sparkling up brilliantly. Thus reminded to turn towards his quarters, he was in the act of doing so, when a very little hand crept into his, and a very little voice said:

"O! If you please, I am lost!"

He looked down, and saw a very little fair-haired girl.

"Yes," she said, confirming her words with a serious nod. "I am indeed. I am lost."

Greatly perplexed, he stopped, looked about him for help, descried none, and said, bending low: "Where do you live, my child?"

"I don't know where I live," she returned.

"I am lost."

"What is your name?"

"Polly."

"What is your other name?"

The reply was prompt, but unintelligible.

Imitating the sound, as he caught it, he hazarded the guess, "Trivits?"

"O no!" said the child, shaking her head.

"Nothing like that."

"Say it again, little one."

An unpromising business. For this time it had quite a different sound.

He made the venture: "Paddens?"

"O no!" said the child. "Nothing like that."

"Once more. Let us try it again, dear."

A most hopeless business. This time it swelled into four syllables. "It can't be Tap-pitarver?" said Barbox Brothers, rubbing his head with his hat in discomfiture.

"No! It ain't," the child quietly assented.

On her trying this unfortunate name once more, with extraordinary efforts at distinctness, it swelled into eight syllables at least.

"Ah! I think," said Barbox Brothers, with a desperate air of resignation, "that we had better give it up."

"But I am lost," said the child, nestling her little hand more closely in his, "and you'll take care of me, won't you?"

If ever a man were disconcerted by division between compassion on the one hand, and the very imbecility of irresolution on the other, here the man was. "Lost!" he repeated, looking down at the child. "I am sure I am. What is to be done!"

"Where do *you* live?" asked the child, looking up at him, wistfully.

"Over there," he answered, pointing vaguely in the direction of his hotel.

"Hain't we better go there?" said the child.

"Really," he replied, "I don't know but what we had."

So they set off, hand in hand. He, through comparison of himself against his little companion, with a clumsy feeling on him as if he had just developed into a foolish giant. She, clearly elevated in her own tiny opinion by having got him so neatly out of his embarrassment.

"We are going to have dinner when we get there, I suppose?" said Polly.

"Well," he rejoined, "I—yes, I suppose we are."

"Do you like your dinner?" asked the child.

"Why, on the whole," said Barbox Brothers, "yes, I think I do."

"I do mine," said Polly. "Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"No. Have you?"

"Mine are dead."

"O!" said Barbox Brothers. With that absurd sense of unwieldiness of mind and body weighing him down, he would have not known how to pursue the conversation beyond this curt rejoinder, but that the child was always ready for him.

"What," she asked, turning her soft hand coaxingly in his, "are you going to do to amuse me, after dinner?"

"Upon my soul, Polly," exclaimed Barbox Brothers, very much at a loss, "I have not the slightest idea!"

"Then I tell you what," said Polly. "Have you got any cards at your house?"

"Plenty," said Barbox Brothers, in a boastful vein.

"Very well. Then I'll build houses, and you shall look at me. You mustn't blow, you know."

"O no!" said Barbox Brothers. "No, no, no. No blowing. Blowing's not fair."

He flattered himself that he had said this pretty well for an idiotic monster; but the child, instantly perceiving the awkwardness of his attempt to adapt himself to her level, utterly destroyed his hopeful opinion of himself by saying, compassionately: "What a funny man you are!"

Feeling, after this melancholy failure, as if he every minute grew bigger and heavier in person, and weaker in mind, Barbox gave himself up for a bad job. No giant ever submitted more meekly to be led in triumph by all-conquering Jack, than he to be bound in slavery to Polly.

"Do you know any stories?" she asked him.

He was reduced to the humiliating confession: "No."

"What a dunce you must be, mustn't you?" said Polly.

He was reduced to the humiliating confession: "Yes."

"Would you like me to teach you a story? But you must remember it, you know, and be able to tell it right to somebody else afterwards?"

He professed that it would afford him the highest mental gratification to be taught a story, and that he would humbly endeavour to retain it in his mind. Whereupon Polly, giving her hand a new little turn in his, expressive of settling down for enjoyment, commenced a long romance, of which every relishing clause began with the words: "So this" or "And so this." As, "So this boy;" or, "So this fairy;" or, "And so this pie was four yards round, and two yards and a quarter deep." The interest of the romance was derived from the intervention of this fairy to punish this boy for having a greedy appetite. To achieve which purpose, this fairy made this pie, and this boy ate and ate and ate, and his cheeks swelled and swelled and swelled. There were many tributary circumstances, but the forcible interest culminated in the total consumption of this pie, and the bursting of this boy. Truly he was a fine sight, Barbox Brothers, with serious attentive face, and ear bent down, much jostled on the pavements of the busy town, but afraid of losing a single incident of the epic, lest he should be examined in it by-and-by and found deficient.

Thus they arrived at the hotel. And there he had to say at the bar, and said awkwardly enough: "I have found a little girl!"

The whole establishment turned out to look at the little girl. Nobody knew her; nobody could make out her name, as she set it forth—except one chambermaid, who said it was Constantinople—which it wasn't.

"I will dine with my young friend in a private room," said Barbox Brothers to the hotel authorities, "and perhaps you will be so good as let the police know that the pretty baby is here. I suppose she is sure to be inquired for, soon, if she has not been already. Come along, Polly."

Perfectly at ease and peace, Polly came along, but, finding the stairs rather stiff work, was carried up by Barbox Brothers. The dinner was a most transcendent success, and the Barbox sheepishness, under Polly's directions how to mince her meat for her, and how to diffuse gravy over the plate with a liberal and equal hand, was another fine sight.

"And now," said Polly, "while we are at dinner, you be good, and tell me that story I taught you."

With the tremors of a civil service examination on him, and very uncertain indeed, not only as to the epoch at which the pie appeared in history, but also as to the measurements of that indispensable fact, Barbox Brothers made a shaky beginning, but under encouragement did very fairly. There was a want of breadth observable in his rendering of the cheeks, as well as the appetite, of the boy; and there was a certain fateness in his fairy, referable to an under-current of desire to account for her. Still, as the first lumbering performance of a good-humoured monster, it passed muster.

"I told you to be good," said Polly, "and you are good, ain't you?"

"I hope so," replied Barbox Brothers.

Such was his deference that Polly, elevated on a platform of sofa-cushions in a chair at his right hand, encouraged him with a pat or two on the face from the greasy bowl of her spoon, and even with a gracious kiss. In getting on her feet upon her chair, however, to give him this last reward, she toppled forward among the dishes, and caused him to exclaim as he effected her rescue: "Gracious Angels! Whew! I thought we were in the fire, Polly!"

"What a coward you are, ain't you?" said Polly, when replaced.

"Yes, I am rather nervous," he replied. "Whew! Don't, Polly! Don't flourish your spoon, or you'll go over sideways. Don't tilt up your legs when you laugh, Polly, or you'll go over backwards. Whew! Polly, Polly," said Barbox Brothers, nearly succumbing to despair, "we are environed with dangers!"

Indeed, he could deservy no security from the pitfalls that were yawning for Polly, but in proposing to her, after dinner, to sit upon a low stool. "I will, if you will," said Polly. So, as peace of mind should go before all, he begged the waiter to wheel aside the table, bring a pack of cards, a couple of footstools, and a screen, and close in Polly and himself before the fire, as it were in a snug room within the room. Then, finest sight of all, was Barbox Brothers on his footstool, with a pint decanter on the rug, contemplating Polly as she built successfully, and growing blue in the face with holding his breath, lest he should blow the house down.

"How you stare, don't you?" said Polly, in a houseless pause.

Detected in the ignoble fact, he felt obliged to admit, apologetically: "I am afraid I was looking rather hard at you, Polly."

"Why do you stare?" asked Polly.

"I cannot," he murmured to himself, "recall why.—I don't know, Polly."

"You must be a simpleton to do things and not know why, mustn't you?" said Polly.

In spite of which reproof, he looked at the child again, intently, as she bent her head over her card-structure, her rich curls shading her face. "It is impossible," he thought, "that I can ever have seen this pretty baby before. Can I have dreamed of her? In some sorrowful dream?"

He could make nothing of it. So he went into the building trade as a journeyman under Polly, and they built three stories high, four stories high: even five.

"I say. Who do you think is coming?" asked Polly, rubbing her eyes after tea.

He guessed: "The waiter?"

"No," said Polly, "the dustman. I am getting sleepy."

A new embarrassment for Barbox Brothers!

"I don't think I am going to be fetched to-night," said Polly; "what do you think?"

He thought not, either. After another quarter of an hour, the dustman not merely impending but actually arriving, recourse was had to the Constantinopolitan chambermaid: who cheerily undertook that the child should sleep in a comfortable and wholesome room, which she herself would share.

"And I know you will be careful, won't you," said Barbox Brothers, as a new fear dawned upon him, "that she don't fall out of bed?"

Polly found this so highly entertaining that she was under the necessity of clutching him round the neck with both arms as he sat on his footstool picking up the cards, and rocking him to and fro, with her dimpled chin on his shoulder.

"O what a coward you are, ain't you!" said Polly. "Do you fall out of bed?"

"N—not generally, Polly."

"No more do I."

With that, Polly gave him a reassuring hug or two to keep him going, and then giving that confiding mite of a hand of hers to be swallowed up in the hand of the Constantinopolitan chambermaid, trotted off, chattering, without a vestige of anxiety.

He looked after her, had the screen removed and the table and chairs replaced, and still looked after her. He paced the room for half an hour. "A most engaging little creature, but it's not that. A most winning little voice, but it's not that. That has much to do with it, but there is something more. How can it be that I seem to know this child? What was it she imperfectly recalled to me when I felt her touch in the street, and, looking down at her, saw her looking up at me?"

"Mr. Jackson!"

With a start he turned towards the sound of the subdued voice, and saw his answer standing at the door.

"O Mr. Jackson, do not be severe with me. Speak a word of encouragement to me, I beseech you."

"You are Polly's mother."

"Yes."

Yes. Polly herself might come to this, one day. As you see what the rose was, in its faded leaves; as you see what the summer growth of the woods was, in their wintry branches; so Polly might be traced, one day, in a care-worn woman like this, with her hair turned grey. Before him, were the ashes of a dead fire that had once burned bright. This was the woman he had loved. This was the woman he had lost. Such had been the constancy of his imagination to her, so had Time spared her under its withholding, that now, seeing how roughly the inexorable hand had struck her, his soul was filled with pity and amazement.

He led her to a chair, and stood leaning on a corner of the chimney-piece, with his head resting on his hand, and his face half averted.

"Did you see me in the street, and show me to your child?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Is the little creature, then, a party to deceit?"

"I hope there is no deceit. I said to her, 'We have lost our way, and I must try to find mine by myself. Go to that gentleman and tell him you are lost. You shall be fetched by-and-by.' Perhaps you have not thought how very young she is?"

"She is very self-reliant."

"Perhaps because she is so young?"

He asked, after a short pause, "Why did you do this?"

"O Mr. Jackson, do you ask me? In the hope that you might see something in my innocent child to soften your heart towards me. Not only towards me, but towards my husband."

He suddenly turned about, and walked to the opposite end of the room. He came back again with a slower step, and resumed his former attitude, saying:

"I thought you had emigrated to America?"

"We did. But life went ill with us there, and we came back."

"Do you live in this town?"

"Yes. I am a daily teacher of music here. My husband is a book-keeper."

"Are you—forgive my asking—poor?"

"We earn enough for our wants. That is not our distress. My husband is very, very ill of a lingering disorder. He will never recover—"

"You check yourself. If it is for want of the encouraging word you spoke of, take it from me. I cannot forget the old time, Beatrice."

"God bless you!" she replied, with a burst of tears, and gave him her trembling hand.

"Compose yourself. I cannot be composed if you are not, for to see you weep distresses me beyond expression. Speak freely to me. Trust me."

She shaded her face with her veil, and after a little while spoke calmly. Her voice had the ring of Polly's.

"It is not that my husband's mind is at all impaired by his bodily suffering, for I assure you that is not the case. But in his weakness, and in his knowledge that he is incurably ill, he cannot overcome the ascendancy of one idea. It preys upon him, embitters every moment of his painful life, and will shorten it."

She stopping, he said again: "Speak freely to me. Trust me."

"We have had five children before this darling, and they all lie in their little graves. He believes that they have withered away under a curse, and that it will blight this child like the rest."

"Under what curse?"

"Both I and he have it on our conscience that we tried you very heavily, and I do not know but that, if I were as ill as he, I might suffer in my mind as he does. This is the constant burden:—I believe, Beatrice, I was the only friend that Mr. Jackson ever cared to make, though I was so much his junior. The more influence he acquired in the business, the higher he advanced me, and I was alone in his private confidence. I came between him and you, and I took you from him. We were both secret, and the blow fell when he was wholly unprepared. The anguish it caused a man so compressed, must have been terrible; the wrath it awakened, inappassable. So, a curse came to be invoked on our poor pretty little flowers, and they fell."

"And you, Beatrice," he asked, when she had ceased to speak, and there had been a silence afterwards: "how say you?"

"Until within these few weeks I was afraid of you, and I believed that you would never, never, forgive."

"Until within these few weeks," he repeated. "Have you changed your opinion of me within these few weeks?"

"Yes."

"For what reason?"

"I was getting some pieces of music in a shop in this town, when, to my terror, you came in. As I veiled my face and stood in the dark end of the shop, I heard you explain that you wanted a musical instrument for a bedridden girl. Your voice and manner were so softened, you showed such interest in its selection, you took it away yourself with so much tenderness of care and pleasure, that I knew you were a man with a most gentle heart. O Mr. Jackson, Mr. Jackson, if you could have felt the refreshing rain of tears that followed for me!"

Was Phoebe playing at that moment, on her distant couch? He seemed to hear her.

"I inquired in the shop where you lived, but could get no information. As I had heard you say that you were going back by the next train (but you did not say where), I resolved to visit the station at about that time of day, as often as I could, between my lessons, on the chance of seeing you again. I have been there very often, but saw you no more until to-day. You were

meditating as you walked the street, but the calm expression of your face emboldened me to send my child to you. And when I saw you bend your head to speak tenderly to her, I prayed to God to forgive me for having ever brought a sorrow on it. I now pray to you to forgive me, and to forgive my husband. I was very young, he was young too, and in the ignorant hardihood of such a time of life we don't know what we do to those who have undergone more discipline. You generous man! You good man! So to raise me up and make nothing of my crime against you!"—for he would not see her on her knees, and soothed her as a kind father might have soothed an erring daughter—"thank you, bless you, thank you!"

When he next spoke, it was after having drawn aside the window-curtain and looked out a while. Then, he only said:

"Is Polly asleep?"

"Yes. As I came in, I met her going away upstairs, and put her to bed myself."

"Leave her with me for to-morrow, Beatrice, and write me your address on this leaf of my pocket-book. In the evening I will bring her home to you—and to her father."

* * * * *

"Hallo!" cried Polly, putting her saucy sunny face in at the door next morning when breakfast was ready: "I thought I was fetched last night!"

"So you were, Polly, but I asked leave to keep you here for the day, and to take you home in the evening."

"Upon my word!" said Polly. "You are very cool, ain't you?"

However, Polly seemed to think it a good idea, and added, "I suppose I must give you a kiss though you *are* cool." The kiss given and taken, they sat down to breakfast in a highly conversational tone.

"Of course, you are going to amuse me?" said Polly.

"Oh, of course," said Barbox Brothers.

In the pleasurable height of her anticipations, Polly found it indispensable to put down her piece of toast, cross one of her little fat knees over the other, and bring her little fat right hand down into her left hand with a business-like slap. After this gathering of herself together, Polly, by that time, a mere heap of dimples, asked in a wheedling manner: "What are we going to do, you dear old thing?"

"Why, I was thinking," said Barbox Brothers, "—but are you fond of horses, Polly?"

"Ponies, I am," said Polly, "especially when their tails are long. But horses—n—no—too big, you know."

"Well," pursued Barbox Brothers, in a spirit of grave mysterious confidence adapted to the importance of the consultation, "I did see yesterday, Polly, on the walls, pictures of two long-tailed ponies, speckled all over——"

"No, no, no!" cried Polly, in an ecstatic desire to linger on the charming details. "Not speckled all over!"

"Speckled all over. Which ponies jump through hoops——"

"No, no, no!" cried Polly, as before. "They never jump through hoops!"

"Yes, they do. O I assure you they do. And eat pie in pinafores——"

"Ponies eating pie in pinafores!" said Polly. "What a story-teller you are, ain't you?"

"Upon my honour.—And fire off guns."

(Polly hardly seemed to see the force of the ponies resorting to fire-arms.)

"And I was thinking," pursued the exemplary Barbox, "that if you and I were to go to the Circus where these ponies are, it would do our constitutions good."

"Does that mean, amuse us?" inquired Polly. "What long words you do use, don't you?"

Apologetic for having wandered out of his depth, he replied: "That means amuse us. That is exactly what it means. There are many other wonders besides the ponies, and we shall see them all. Ladies and gentlemen in spangled dresses, and elephants and lions and tigers."

Polly became observant of the teapot, with a curled-up nose indicating some uneasiness of mind. "They never get out, of course," she remarked as a mere truism.

"The elephants and lions and tigers? O dear no!"

"O dear no!" said Polly. "And of course nobody's afraid of the ponies shooting anybody."

"Not the least in the world."

"No, no, not the least in the world," said Polly.

"I was also thinking," proceeded Barbox, "that if we were to look in at the toy-shop, to choose a doll——"

"Not dressed!" cried Polly, with a clap of her hands. "No, no, no, not dressed!"

"Full dressed. Together with a house, and all things necessary for housekeeping——"

Polly gave a little scream, and seemed in danger of falling into a swoon of bliss.

"What a darling you are!" she languidly exclaimed, leaning back in her chair. "Come and be hugged, or I must come and hug you."

This resplendent programme was carried into execution with the utmost rigour of the law. It being essential to make the purchase of the doll its first feature—or that lady would have lost the ponies—the toy-shop expedition took precedence. Polly in the magic warehouse, with a doll as large as herself under each arm, and a neat assortment of some twenty more on view upon the counter, did indeed present a spectacle of indecision not quite compatible with unalloyed happiness, but the light cloud passed. The lovely specimen oftenest chosen, oftenest rejected, and finally abided by, was of Circassian descent, possessing as much boldness of beauty as was reconcilable with extreme feebleness of mouth, and combining a sky-blue silk pelisse with rose-coloured satin trousers, and a black velvet hat: which this fair stranger to our northern shores would seem to have founded

on the portraits of the late Duchess of Kent. The name this distinguished foreigner brought with her from beneath the glowing skies of a sunny clime was (on Polly's authority) Miss Melluka, and the costly nature of her outfit as a housekeeper, from the Barbox coffers, may be inferred from the two facts that her silver teaspoons were as large as her kitchen poker, and that the proportions of her watch exceeded those of her frying-pan. Miss Melluka was graciously pleased to express her entire approbation of the Cireus, and so was Polly; for the ponies were speckled, and brought down nobody when they fired, and the savagery of the wild beasts appeared to be mere smoke—which article, in fact, they did produce in large quantities from their insides. The Barbox absorption in the general subject throughout the realisation of these delights was again a sight to see, nor was it less worthy to behold at dinner, when he drank to Miss Melluka, tied stiff in a chair opposite to Polly (the fair Circassian possessing an unbendable spine), and even induced the waiter to assist in carrying out with due decorum the prevailing glorious idea. To wind up, there came the agreeable fever of getting Miss Melluka and all her wardrobe and rich possessions into a fly with Polly, to be taken home. But by that time Polly had become unable to look upon such accumulated joys with waking eyes, and had withdrawn her consciousness into the wonderful Paradise of a child's sleep. "Sleep, Polly, sleep," said Barbox Brothers, as her head dropped on his shoulder; "you shall not fall out of this bed, easily, at any rate!"

What rustling piece of paper he took from his pocket, and carefully folded into the bosom of Polly's frock, shall not be mentioned. He said nothing about it, and nothing shall be said about it. They drove to a modest suburb of the great ingenious town, and stopped at the fore-court of a small house. "Do not wake the child," said Barbox Brothers, softly, to the driver, "I will carry her in as she is."

Greeting the light at the opened door which was held by Polly's mother, Polly's bearer passed on with mother and child into a ground-floor room. There, stretched on a sofa, lay a sick man, sorely wasted, who covered his eyes with his emaciated hands.

"Tresham," said Barbox, in a kindly voice, "I have brought you back your Polly, fast asleep. Give me your hand, and tell me you are better."

The sick man reached forth his right hand, and bowed his head over the hand into which it was taken, and kissed it. "Thank you, thank you! I may say that I am well and happy."

"That's brave," said Barbox. "Tresham, I have a fancy—can you make room for me beside you here?"

He sat down on the sofa as he said the words, cherishing the plump peachy cheek that lay uppermost on his shoulder.

"I have a fancy, Tresham (I am getting quite an old fellow now, you know, and old fellows may take fancies into their heads some-

times), to give up Polly, having found her, to no one but you. Will you take her from me?"

As the father held out his arms for the child, each of the two men looked steadily at the other.

"She is very dear to you, Tresham?"

"Unutterably dear."

"God bless her! It is not much, Polly," he continued, turning his eyes upon her peaceful face as he apostrophised her, "it is not much, Polly, for a blind and sinful man to invoke a blessing on something so far better than himself as a little child is; but it would be much—much upon his cruel head, and much upon his guilty soul—if he could be so wicked as to invoke a curse. He had better have a millstone round his neck, and be cast into the deepest sea. Live and thrive, my pretty baby!" Here he kissed her. "Live and prosper, and become in time the mother of other little children, like the Angels who behold The Father's face!"

He kissed her again, gave her up gently to both her parents, and went out.

But he went not to Wales. No, he never went to Wales. He went straightway for another stroll about the town, and he looked in upon the people at their work, and at their play, here, there, everywhere, and where not. For he was Barbox Brothers and Co. now, and had taken thousands of partners into the solitary firm.

He had at length got back to his hotel room, and was standing before his fire refreshing himself with a glass of hot drink which he had stood upon the chimney-piece, when he heard the town clocks striking, and, referring to his watch, found the evening to have so slipped away, that they were striking twelve. As he put up his watch again, his eyes met those of his reflection in the chimney-glass.

"Why it's your birthday already," he said, smiling. "You are looking very well. I wish you many happy returns of the day."

He had never before bestowed that wish upon himself. "By Jupiter!" he discovered, "it alters the whole case of running away from one's birthday! It's a thing to explain to Phoebe. Besides, here is quite a long story to tell her, that has sprung out of the road with no story. I'll go back, instead of going on. I'll go back by my friend Lamps's Up X presently."

He went back to Mugby Junction, and in point of fact he established himself at Mugby Junction. It was the convenient place to live in, for brightening Phoebe's life. It was the convenient place to live in, for having her taught music by Beatrice. It was the convenient place to live in, for occasionally borrowing Polly. It was the convenient place to live in, for being joined at will to all sorts of agreeable places and persons. So, he became settled there, and, his house standing in an elevated situation, it is noteworthy of him in conclusion, as Polly herself might (not irreverently) have put it:

There was an Old Barbox who lived on a hill,
And if he ain't gone, he lives there still.

HERE FOLLOWS THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT WAS SEEN, HEARD, OR OTHERWISE PICKED UP, BY THE GENTLEMAN FOR NOWHERE, IN HIS CAREFUL STUDY OF THE JUNCTION.

MAIN LINE. THE BOY AT MUGBY.

I am The Boy at Mugby. That's about what I am.

You don't know what I mean? What a pity! But I think you do. I think you must. Look here. I am the Boy at what is called The Refreshment Room at Mugby Junction, and what's proudest boast is, that it never yet refreshed a mortal being.

Up in a corner of the Down Refreshment Room at Mugby Junction, in the height of twenty-seven cross draughts (I've often counted 'em, while they brush the First Class hair twenty-seven ways), behind the bottles, among the glasses, bounded on the north-west by the beer, stood pretty far to the right of a metallic object that's at times the tea-urn and at times the soup-tureen, according to the nature of the last twang imparted to its contents which are the same groundwork, fended off from the traveller by a barrier of stale sponge-cakes erected atop of the counter, and lastly exposed sideways to the glare of Our Missis's eye—you ask a Boy so situated, next time you stop in a hurry at Mugby, for anything to drink; you take particular notice that he'll try to seem not to hear you, that he'll appear in a absent manner to survey the Line through a transparent medium composed of your head and body, and that he won't serve you as long as you can possibly bear it. That's Me.

What a lark it is! We are the Model Establishment, we are, at Mugby. Other Refreshment Rooms send their imperfect young ladies up to be finished off by our Missis. For some of the young ladies, when they're new to the business, come into it mild! Ah! Our Missis, she soon takes that out of 'em. Why, I originally come into the business meek myself. But Our Missis she soon took that out of me.

What a delightful lark it is! I look upon us Refreshmenters as occupying the only proudly independent footing on the Line. There's Papers for instance—my honourable friend if he will allow me to call him so—him as belongs to Smith's bookstall. Why he no more dares to be up to our Refreshmenting games, than he dares to jump atop of a locomotive with her steam at full pressure, and cut away upon her alone, driving himself, at limited-mail speed. Papers, he'd get his head punched at every compartment, first second and third, the whole length of a train, if he was to venture to imitate my demeanour. It's the same with the porters, the same with the guards, the same with the ticket clerks, the same the whole way up to the secretary, traffic manager, or very chairman. There ain't a one among 'em on the nobly independent footing we are. Did you ever catch one of them, when you wanted anything of him, making a system of surveying the Line through

a transparent medium composed of your head and body? I should hope not.

You should see our Bandolining Room at Mugby Junction. It's led to, by the door behind the counter which you'll notice usually stands ajar, and it's the room where Our Missis and our young ladies Bandolines their hair. You should see 'em at it, betwixt trains, Bandolining away, as if they was anointing themselves for the combat. When you're telegraphed, you should see their noses all a going up with scorn, as if it was a part of the working of the same Cooke and Wheatstone electrical machinery. You should hear Our Missis give the word "Here comes the Beast to be Fed!" and then you should see 'em indignantly skipping across the Line, from the Up to the Down, or Wier Warsaw, and begin to pitch the stale pastry into the plates, and chuck the sawdust sangwiches under the glass covers, and get out the—ha ha ha!—the Sherry—O my eye, my eye!—for your Refreshment.

It's only in the Isle of the Brave and Land of the Free (by which of course I mean to say Britannia) that Refreshmenting is so effective, so wholesome, so constitutional, a check upon the public. There was a foreigner, which having politely, with his hat off, beseeched our young ladies and Our Missis for "a leetel gloss hoff pramdee," and having had the Line surveyed through him by all and no other acknowledgment, was a proceeding at last to help himself, as seems to be the custom in his own country, when Our Missis with her hair almost a coming un-Bandolined with rage, and her eyes omitting sparks, flew at him, coched the decanter out of his hand, and said: "Put it down! I won't allow that!" The foreigner turned pale, stepped back with his arms stretched out in front of him, his hands clasped, and his shoulders riz, and exclaimed: "Ah! Is it possible this! That these disdainous females and this ferocious old woman are placed here by the administration, not only to empoison the voyagers, but to affront them! Great Heaven! How arrives it? The English people. Or is he then a slave? Or idiot?" Another time, a merry wideawake American gent had tried the sawdust and spit it out, and had tried the Sherry and spit that out, and had tried in vain to sustain exhausted nature upon Butter-Scotch, and had been rather extra Bandolined and Line-surveyed through, when, as the bell was ringing and he paid Our Missis, he says, very loud and good-tempered: "I tell Yew what 'tis, ma'arn. I la'af. Theer! I la'af. I Dew. I ougter ha' seen most things, for I hail from the Unlimited side of the Atlantic Ocean, and I haive travelled right slick over the Limited, head on through Jee-rusalem and the East, and likewise France and Italy, Europe Old World, and am now upon the track to the Chief European

Village; but such an Institution as Yew, and Yewer young ladies, and Yewer fixin's solid and liquid, afore the glorious Tarnal I never did see yet! And if I hain't found the eighth wonder of monarchical Creation, in finding Yew, and Yewer young ladies, and Yewer fixin's solid and liquid, all as aforesaid, established in a country where the people air not absolute Loo-naticks, I am Extra Double Darned with a Nip and Frizzle to the innermost grit! Wheerfur—Theer!—I la'af! I Dew, ma'arm. I la'af!" And so he went, stamping and shaking his sides, along the platform all the way to his own compartment.

I think it was her standing up agin the Foreigner, as giv' Our Missis the idea of going over to France, and drowing a comparison betwixt Refreshmenting as followed among the frog-eaters, and Refreshmenting as triumphant in the Isle of the Brave and Land of the Free (by which of course I mean to say agin, Britannia). Our young ladies, Miss Whiff, Miss Piff, and Mrs. Sniff, was unanimous opposed to her going; for, as they says to Our Missis one and all, it is well bekown to the heads of the herth as no other nation except Britain has a idea of anythink, but above all of business. Why then should you tire yourself to prove what is already proved? Our Missis however (being a teaser at all pints) stood out grim obstinate, and got a return pass by South-Eastern Tidal, to go right through, if such should be her dispositions, to Marsilles.

Sniff is husband to Mrs. Sniff, and is a regular insignificant cove. He looks arter the sawdust department in a back room, and is sometimes when we are very hard put to it let in behind the counter with a corkscrew; but never when it can be helped, his demeanour towards the public being disgusting servile. How Mrs. Sniff ever come so far to lower herself as to marry him, I don't know; but I suppose *he* does, and I should think he wished he didn't, for he leads a awful life. Mrs. Sniff couldn't be much harder with him if he was public. Similarly, Miss Whiff and Miss Piff, taking the tone of Mrs. Sniff, they shoulder Sniff about when he is let in with a corkscrew, and they whisk things out of his hands when in his servility he is a going to let the public have 'em, and they snap him up when in the crawling baseness of his spirit he is a going to answer a public question, and they drow more tears into his eyes than ever the mustard does which he all day long lays on to the sawdust. (But it ain't strong.) Once, when Sniff had the repulsiveness to reach across to get the milk-pot to hand over for a baby, I see Our Missis in her rage catch him by both his shoulders and spin him out into the Bandolining Room.

But Mrs. Sniff. How different! She's the one! She's the one as you'll notice to be always looking another way from you, when you look at her. She's the one with the small waist buckled in tight in front, and with the lace cuffs at her wrists, which she puts on the edge of the counter before her, and stands a smoothing while the public foams. This smoothing the cuffs and

looking another way while the public foams, is the last accomplishment taught to the young ladies as come to Mugby to be finished by Our Missis; and it's always taught by Mrs. Sniff.

When Our Missis went away upon her journey, Mrs. Sniff was left in charge. She did hold the public in check most beautiful! In all my time, I never see half so many cups of tea given without milk to people as wanted it with, nor half so many cups of tea with milk given to people as wanted it without. When foaming ensued, Mrs. Sniff would say: "Then you'd better settle it among yourselves, and change with one another." It was a most highly delicious lark. I enjoyed the Refreshmenting business more than ever, and was so glad I had took to it when young.

Our Missis returned. It got circulated among the young ladies, and it as it might be penetrated to me through the crevices of the Bandolining Room, that she had Errors to reveal, if revelations so contemptible could be dignified with the name. Agitation become awakened. Excitement was up in the stirrups. Expectation stood a tiptoe. At length it was put forth that on our slackest evening in the week, and at our slackest time of that evening betwixt trains, Our Missis would give her views of foreign Refreshmenting, in the Bandolining Room.

It was arranged tasteful for the purpose. The Bandolining table and glass was hid in a corner, a arm-chair was elevated on a packing-case for Our Missis's oekypation, a table and a tumbler of water (no sherry in it, thankce) was placed beside it. Two of the pupils, the season being autumn, and hollyhocks and daliahs being in, ornamented the wall with three devices in those flowers. On one might be read, "MAY ALBION NEVER LEARN;" on another, "KEEP THE PUBLIC DOWN;" on another, "OUR REFRESHMENTING CHARTER." The whole had a beautiful appearance, with which the beauty of the sentiments corresponded.

On Our Missis's brow was wrote Severity, as she ascended the fatal platform. (Not that that was anythink new.) Miss Whiff and Miss Piff sat at her feet. Three chairs from the Waiting Room might have been perceived by a average eye, in front of her, on which the pupils was accommodated. Behind them, a very close observer might have discerned a Boy. Myself.

"Where," said Our Missis, glancing gloomily around, "is Sniff?"

"I thought it better," answered Mrs. Sniff, "that he should not be let to come in. He is such an Ass."

"No doubt," assented Our Missis. "But for that reason is it not desirable to improve his mind?"

"O! Nothing will ever improve *him*," said Mrs. Sniff.

"However," pursued Our Missis, "call him in, Ezekiel."

I called him in. The appearance of the low-minded cove was hailed with disapprobation from all sides, on account of his having brought his corkscrew with him. He pleaded "the force of habit."

"The force!" said Mrs. Sniff. "Don't let us have you talking about force, for Gracious sake. There! Do stand still where you are, with your back against the wall."

He is a smiling piece of vacancy, and he smiled in the mean way in which he will even smile at the public if he gets a chance (language can say no meaner of him), and he stood upright near the door with the back of his head agin the wall, as if he was a waiting for somebody to come and measure his height for the Army.

"I should not enter, ladies," says Our Missis, "on the revolting disclosures I am about to make, if it was not in the hope that they will cause you to be yet more impleable in the exercise of the power you wield in a constitutional country, and yet more devoted to the constitutional motto which I see before me;" it was behind her, but the words sounded better so; "May Albion never learn!"

Here the pupils as had made the motto, admired it, and cried, "Hear! Hear! Hear!" Sniff, showing an inclination to join in chorus, got himself frowned down by every brow.

"The baseness of the French," pursued Our Missis, "as displayed in the fawning nature of their Refreshmenting, equals, if not surpasses, anything as was ever heard of the baseness of the celebrated Buonaparte."

Miss Whiff, Miss Piff and me, we dored a heavy breath, equal to saying, "We thought as much!" Miss Whiff and Miss Piff seeming to object to my doring mine along with theirs, I dored another, to aggravate 'em.

"Shall I be believed," says Our Missis, with flashing eyes, "when I tell you that no sooner had I set my foot upon that treacherous shore—"

Here Sniff, either busting out mad, or thinking aloud, says, in a low voice: "Feet. Plural, you know."

The cowering that come upon him when he was spurned by all eyes, added to his being beneath contempt, was sufficient punishment for a cove so grovelling. In the midst of a silence rendered more impressive by the turned-up female noses with which it was pervaded, Our Missis went on:

"Shall I be believed when I tell you that no sooner had I landed," this word with a killing look at Sniff, "on that treacherous shore, than I was ushered into a Refreshment Room where there were, I do not exaggerate, actually eatable things to eat?"

A groan burst from the ladies. I not only did myself the honour of jining, but also of lengthening it out.

"Where there were," Our Missis added, "not only eatable things to eat, but also drinkable things to drink?"

A murmur, swelling almost into a scream, ariz. Miss Piff, trembling with indignation, called out: "Name!"

"I will name," said Our Missis. "There was roast fowls, hot and cold; there was smoking roast veal surrounded with browned potatoes; there was hot soup with (again I

ask shall I be credited?) nothing bitter in it, and no flour to choke off the consumer; there was a variety of cold dishes set off with jelly; there was salad; there was—mark me!—*fresh* pastry, and that of a light construction; there was a luscious show of fruit. There was bottles and decanters of sound small wine, of every size and adapted to every pocket; the same odious statement will apply to brandy; and these were set out upon the counter so that all could help themselves."

Our Missis's lips so quivered, that Mrs. Sniff, though scarcely less convulsed than she were, got up and held the tumbler to them.

"This," proceeds Our Missis, "was my first unconstitutional experience. Well would it have been, if it had been my last and worst. But no. As I proceeded further into that enslaved and ignorant land, its aspect became more hideous. I need not explain to this assembly, the ingredients and formation of the British Refreshment sangwich?"

Universal laughter—except from Sniff, who, as sangwich-cutter, shook his head in a state of the utmost dejection as he stood with it agin the wall.

"Well!" said Our Missis, with dilated nostrils. "Take a fresh crisp long crusty penny loaf made of the whitest and best flour. Cut it longwise through the middle. Insert a fair and nicely fitting slice of ham. Tie a smart piece of ribbon round the middle of the whole to bind it together. Add at one end a neat wrapper of clean white paper by which to hold it. And the universal French Refreshment sangwich busts on your disgusted vision."

A cry of "Shame!" from all—except Sniff, which rubbed his stomach with a soothing hand.

"I need not," said Our Missis, "explain to this assembly, the usual formation and fitting of the British Refreshment Room?"

No, no, and laughter. Sniff agin shaking his head in low spirits agin the wall.

"Well," said Our Missis, "what would you say to a general decoration of everything, to hangings (sometimes elegant), to easy velvet furniture, to abundance of little tables, to abundance of little seats, to brisk bright waiters, to great convenience, to a pervading cleanliness and tastefulness positively addressing the public and making the Beast thinking itself worth the pains?"

Contemptuous fury on the part of all the ladies. Mrs. Sniff looking as if she wanted somebody to hold her, and everybody else looking as if they'd rather not.

"Three times," said Our Missis, working herself into a truly terrimenious state, "three times did I see these shameful things, only between the coast and Paris, and not counting either: at Hazebroucke, at Arras, at Amiens. But worse remains. Tell me, what would you call a person who should propose in England that there should be kept, say at our own model Mugby Junction, pretty baskets, each holding an assorted cold lunch and dessert for one, each at a certain fixed price, and each within a pas-

senger's power to take away, to empty in the carriage at perfect leisure, and to return at another station fifty or a hundred miles further on?"

There was disagreement what such a person should be called. Whether revolutionist, atheist, Bright (*I* said him), or Un-English. Miss Piff screeched her shrill opinion last, in the words: "A malignant maniac!"

"I adopt," says Our Missis, "the brand set upon such a person by the righteous indignation of my friend Miss Piff. A malignant maniac. Know then, that that malignant maniac has sprung from the congenial soil of France, and that his malignant madness was in unchecked action on this same part of my journey."

I noticed that Sniff was a rubbing his hands, and that Mrs. Sniff had got her eye upon him. But I did not take more particular notice, owing to the excited state in which the young ladies was, and to feeling myself called upon to keep it up with a howl.

"On my experience south of Paris," said Our Missis, in a deep tone, "I will not expatiate. Too loathsome were the task! But fancy this. Fancy a guard coming round, with the train at full speed, to inquire how many for dinner. Fancy his telegraphing forward, the number of diners. Fancy every one expected, and the table elegantly laid for the complete party. Fancy a charming dinner, in a charming room, and the head-cook, concerned for the honour of every dish, superintending in his clean white jacket and cap. Fancy the Beast travelling six hundred miles on end, very fast, and with great punctuality, yet being taught to expect all this to be done for it!"

A spirited chorus of "The Beast!"

I noticed that Sniff was again a rubbing his stomach with a soothing hand, and that he had drored up one leg. But again I didn't take particular notice, looking on myself as called upon to stimulate public feeling. It being a lark besides.

"Putting everything together," said Our Missis, "French Refreshment comes to this, and O it comes to a nice total! First: eatable things to eat, and drinkable things to drink."

A groan from the young ladies, kep' up by me.

"Second: convenience, and even elegance."

Another groan from the young ladies, kep' up by me.

"Third: moderate charges."

This time, a groan from me, kep' up by the young ladies.

"Fourth:—and here," says Our Missis, "I claim your angriest sympathy—attention; common civility, nay, even politeness!"

Me and the young ladies regularly raging mad all together.

"And I cannot in conclusion," says Our Missis, with her spitefullest sneer, "give you a completer pictur of that despicable nation (after what I have related), than assuring you that they wouldn't bear our constitutional ways and noble independence at Mugby Junction, for a single month, and that they would turn us to

the right-about and put another system in our places, as soon as look at us; perhaps sooner, for I do not believe they have the good taste to care to look at us twice."

The swelling tumult was arrested in its rise. Sniff, bore away by his servile disposition, had drored up his leg with a higher and a higher relish, and was now discovered to be waving his corkscrew over his head. It was at this moment that Mrs. Sniff, who had kep' her eye upon him like the fabled obelisk, descended on her victim. Our Missis followed them both out, and cries was heard in the sawdust department.

You come into the Down Refreshment Room, at the Junction, making believe you don't know me, and I'll pint you out with my right thumb over my shoulder which is Our Missis, and which is Miss Whiff, and which is Miss Piff, and which is Mrs. Sniff. But you won't get a chance to see Sniff, because he disappeared that night. Whether he perished, tore to pieces, I cannot say; but his corkscrew alone remains, to bear witness to the servility of his disposition.

NO. 1 BRANCH LINE. THE SIGNAL-MAN.

"Halloa! Below there!"

When he heard a voice thus calling to him, he was standing at the door of his box, with a flag in his hand, furled round its short pole. One would have thought, considering the nature of the ground, that he could not have doubted from what quarter the voice came; but, instead of looking up to where I stood on the top of the steep cutting nearly over his head, he turned himself about and looked down the Line. There was something remarkable in his manner of doing so, though I could not have said, for my life, what. But, I know it was remarkable enough to attract my notice, even though his figure was foreshortened and shadowed, down in the deep trench, and mine was high above him, so steeped in the glow of an angry sunset that I had shaded my eyes with my hand before I saw him at all.

"Halloa! Below!"

From looking down the Line, he turned himself about again, and, raising his eyes, saw my figure high above him.

"Is there any path by which I can come down and speak to you?"

He looked up at me without replying, and I looked down at him without pressing him too soon with a repetition of my idle question. Just then, there came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an oncoming rush that caused me to start back, as though it had force to draw me down. When such vapour as rose to my height from this rapid train, had passed me and was skimming away over the landscape, I looked down again, and saw him re-furling the flag he had shown while the train went by.

I repeated my inquiry. After a pause, during which he seemed to regard me with fixed attention, he motioned with his rolled-up flag to-

wards a point on my level, some two or three hundred yards distant. I called down to him, "All right!" and made for that point. There, by dint of looking closely about me, I found a rough zig-zag descending path notched out: which I followed.

The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually precipitate. It was made through a clammy stone that became oozy and wetter as I went down. For these reasons, I found the way long enough to give me time to recalc a singular air of reluctance or compulsion with which he had pointed out the path.

When I came down low enough upon the zig-zag descent, to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he were waiting for me to appear. He had his left hand at his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand crossed over his breast. His attitude was one of such expectation and watchfulness, that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and, stepping out upon the level of the railroad and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark fallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows. His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping-wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the perspective one way, only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction, terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing, and forbidding air. So little sunlight ever found its way to this spot, that it had an earthy deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

Before he stirred, I was near enough to him to have touched him. Not even then removing his eyes from mine, he stepped back one step, and lifted his hand.

This was a lonesome post to occupy (I said), and it had riveted my attention when I looked down from up yonder. A visitor was a rarity, I should suppose; not an unwelcome rarity, I hoped? In me, he merely saw a man who had been shut up within narrow limits all his life, and who, being at last set free, had a newly-awakened interest in these great works. To such purpose I spoke to him; but I am far from sure of the terms I used, for, besides that I am not happy in opening any conversation, there was something in the man that daunted me.

He directed a most curious look towards the red light near the tunnel's mouth, and looked all about it, as if something were missing from it, and then looked at me.

That light was part of his charge? Was it not?

He answered in a low voice: "Don't you know it is?"

The monstrous thought came into my mind as I perused the fixed eyes and the saturnine face,

that this was a spirit, not a man. I have speculated since, whether there may have been infection in his mind.

In my turn, I stepped back. But in making the action, I detected in his eyes some latent fear of me. This put the monstrous thought to flight.

"You look at me," I said, forcing a smile, "as if you had a dread of me."

"I was doubtful," he returned, "whether I had seen you before."

"Where?"

He pointed to the red light he had looked at. "There?" I said.

Intently watchful of me, he replied (but without sound), Yes.

"My good fellow, what should I do there? However, be that as it may, I never was there, you may swear."

"I think I may," he rejoined. "Yes. I am sure I may."

His manner cleared, like my own. He replied to my remarks with readiness, and in well-chosen words. Had he much to do there? Yes; that was to say, he had enough responsibility to bear; but exactness and watchfulness were what was required of him, and of actual work—manual labour—he had next to none. To change that signal, to trim those lights, and to turn this iron handle now and then, was all he had to do under that head. Regarding those many long and lonely hours of which I seemed to make so much, he could only say that the routine of his life had shaped itself into that form, and he had grown used to it. He had taught himself a language down here—if only to know it by sight, and to have formed his own crude ideas of its pronunciation, could be called learning it. He had also worked at fractions and decimals, and tried a little algebra; but he was, and had been as a boy, a poor hand at figures. Was it necessary for him when on duty, always to remain in that channel of damp air, and could he never rise into the sunshine from between those high stone walls? Why, that depended upon times and circumstances. Under some conditions there would be less upon the Lipc than under others, and the same held good as to certain hours of the day and night. In bright weather, he did choose occasions for getting a little above these lower shadows; but, being at all times liable to be called by his electric bell, and at such times listening for it with redoubled anxiety, the relief was less than I would suppose.

He took me into his box, where there was a fire, a desk for an official book in which he had to make certain entries, a telegraphic instrument with its dial face and needles, and the little bell of which he had spoken. On my trusting that he would excuse the remark that he had been well educated, and (I hoped I might say without offence), perhaps educated above that station, he observed that instances of slight incongruity in such-wise would rarely be found wanting among large bodies of men; that he had heard it was so in workhouses, in the police force, even in that last desperate resource, the army; and that he knew it was so, more or less,

in any great railway staff. He had been, when young (if I could believe it, sitting in that, hut; he scarcely could), a student of natural philosophy, and had attended lectures; but he had run wild, misused his opportunities, gone down, and never risen again. He had no complaint to offer about that. He had made his bed, and he lay upon it. It was far too late to make another.

All that I have here condensed, he said in a quiet manner, with his grave dark regards divided between me and the fire. He threw in the word "Sir," from time to time, and especially when he referred to his youth: as though to request me to understand that he claimed to be nothing but what I found him. He was several times interrupted by the little bell, and had to read off messages, and send replies. Once, he had to stand without the door, and display a flag as a train passed, and make some verbal communication to the driver. In the discharge of his duties I observed him to be remarkably exact and vigilant, breaking off his discourse at a syllable, and remaining silent until what he had to do was done.

In a word, I should have set this man down as one of the safest of men to be employed in that capacity, but for the circumstance that while he was speaking to me he twice broke off with a fallen colour, turned his face towards the little bell when it did not ring, opened the door of the hut (which was kept shut to exclude the unhealthy damp), and looked out towards the red light near the mouth of the tunnel. On both of those occasions, he came back to the fire with the inexplicable air upon him which I had remarked, without being able to define, when we were so far asunder.

Said I when I rose to leave him: "You almost make me think that I have met with a contented man."

(I am afraid I must acknowledge that I said it to lead him on.)

"I believe I used to be so," he rejoined, in the low voice in which he had first spoken; "but I am troubled, sir, I am troubled."

He would have recalled the words if he could. He had said them, however, and I took them up quickly.

"With what? What is your trouble?"

"It is very difficult to impart, sir. It is very, very, difficult to speak of. If ever you make me another visit, I will try to tell you."

"But I expressly intend to make you another visit. Say, when shall it be?"

"I go off early in the morning, and I shall be on again at ten to-morrow night, sir."

"I will come at eleven."

He thanked me, and went out at the door with me. "I'll show my white light, sir," he said, in his peculiar low voice, "till you have found the way up. When you have found it, don't call out! And when you are at the top, don't call out!"

His manner seemed to make the place strike colder to me, but I said no more than "Very well."

"And when you come down to-morrow night,

don't call out! Let me ask you a parting question. What made you cry 'Halloa! Below there!' to-night?"

"Heaven knows," said I. "I cried something to that effect——"

"Not to that effect, sir. Those were the very words. I know them well."

"Admit those were the very words. I said them, no doubt, because I saw you below."

"For no other reason?"

"What other reason could I possibly have!"

"You had no feeling that they were conveyed to you in any supernatural way?"

"No."

He wished me good night, and held up his light. I walked by the side of the down Line of rails (with a very disagreeable sensation of a train coming behind me), until I found the path. It was easier to mount than to descend, and I got back to my inn without any adventure.

Punctual to my appointment, I placed my foot on the first notch of the zig-zag next night, as the distant clocks were striking eleven. He was waiting for me at the bottom, with his white light on. "I have not called out," I said, when we came close together; "may I speak now?" "By all means, sir." "Good night then, and here's my hand." "Good night, sir, and here's mine." With that, we walked side by side to his box, entered it, closed the door, and sat down by the fire.

"I have made up my mind, sir," he began, bending forward as soon as we were seated, and speaking in a tone but a little above a whisper, "that you shall not have to ask me twice what troubles me. I took you for some one else yesterday evening. That troubles me."

"That mistake?"

"No. That some one else."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know."

"Like me?"

"I don't know. I never saw the face. The left arm is across the face, and the right arm is waved. Violently waved. This way."

I followed his action with my eyes, and it was the action of an arm gesticulating with the utmost passion and vehemence: "For God's sake clear the way!"

"One moonlight night," said the man, "I was sitting here, when I heard a voice cry 'Halloa! Below there!' I started up, looked from that door, and saw this Some one else standing by the red light near the tunnel, waving as I just now showed you. The voice seemed hoarse with shouting, and it cried, 'Look out! Look out!' And then again 'Halloa! Below there! Look out!' I caught up my lamp, turned it on red, and ran towards the figure, calling, 'What's wrong? What has happened? Where?' It stood just outside the blackness of the tunnel. I advanced so close upon it that I wondered at its keeping the sleeve across its eyes. I ran right up at it, and had my hand stretched out to pull the sleeve away, when it was gone."

"Into the tunnel," said I.

"No. I ran on into the tunnel, five hundred

yards. I stopped and held my lamp above my head, and saw the figures of the measured distance, and saw the wet stains stealing down the walls and trickling through the arch. I ran out again, faster than I had run in (for I had a mortal abhorrence of the place upon me), and I looked all round the red light with my own red light, and I went up the iron ladder to the gallery atop of it, and I came down again, and ran back here. I telegraphed both ways: 'An alarm has been given. Is anything wrong?' The answer came back, both ways: 'All well.'

Resisting the slow touch of a frozen finger tracing out my spine, I showed him how that this figure must be a deception of his sense of sight, and how that figures, originating in disease of the delicate nerves that minister to the functions of the eye, were known to have often troubled patients, some of whom had become conscious of the nature of their affliction, and had even proved it by experiments upon themselves. "As to an imaginary cry," said I, "do but listen for a moment to the wind in this unnatural valley while we speak so low, and to the wild harp it makes of the telegraph wires!"

That was all very well, he returned, after we had sat listening for a while, and he ought to know something of the wind and the wires, he who so often passed long winter nights there, alone and watching. But he would beg to remark that he had not finished.

I asked his pardon, and he slowly added these words, touching my arm:

"Within six hours after the Appearance, the memorable accident on this Line happened, and within ten hours the dead and wounded were brought along through the tunnel over the spot where the figure had stood."

A disagreeable shudder crept over me, but I did my best against it. It was not to be denied, I rejoined, that this was a remarkable coincidence, calculated deeply to impress his mind. But, it was unquestionable that remarkable coincidences did continually occur, and they must be taken into account in dealing with such a subject. Though to be sure I must admit, I added (for I thought I saw that he was going to bring the objection to bear upon me), men of common sense did not allow much for coincidences in making the ordinary calculations of life.

He again begged to remark that he had not finished.

I again begged his pardon for being betrayed into interruptions.

"This," he said, again laying his hand upon my arm, and glancing over his shoulder with hollow eyes, "was just a year ago. Six or seven months passed, and I had recovered from the surprise and shock, when one morning, as the day was breaking, I, standing at that door, looked towards the red light, and saw the spectre again." He stopped, with a fixed look at me.

"Did it cry out?"

"No. It was silent."

"Did it wave its arm?"

"No. It leaned against the shaft of the

light, with both hands before the face. Like this."

Once more, I followed his action with my eyes. It was an action of mourning. I have seen such an attitude in stone figures on tombs.

"Did you go up to it?"

"I came in and sat down, partly to collect my thoughts, partly because it had turned me faint. When I went to the door again, daylight was above me, and the ghost was gone."

"But nothing followed? Nothing came of this?"

He touched me on the arm with his forefinger twice or thrice, giving a ghastly nod each time:

"That very day, as a train came out of the tunnel, I noticed, at a carriage window on my side, what looked like a confusion of hands and heads, and something waved. I saw it, just in time to signal the driver, Stop! He shut off, and put his brake on, but the train drifted past here a hundred and fifty yards or more. I ran after it, and, as I went along, heard terrible screams and cries. A beautiful young lady had died instantaneously in one of the compartments, and was brought in here, and laid down on this floor between us."

Involuntarily, I pushed my chair back, as I looked from the boards at which he pointed, to himself.

"True, sir. True. Precisely as it happened, so I tell it you."

I could think of nothing to say, to any purpose, and my mouth was very dry. The wind and the wires took up the story with a long lamenting wail.

He resumed. "Now, sir, mark this, and judge how my mind is troubled. The spectre came back, a week ago. Ever since, it has been there, now and again, by fits and starts."

"At the light?"

"At the Danger-light."

"What does it seem to do?"

He repeated, if possible with increased passion and vehemence, that former gesticulation of "For God's sake clear the way!"

Then, he went on. "I have no peace or rest for it. It calls to me, for many minutes together, in an agonised manner, 'Below there! Look out! Look out! It stands waving to me. It rings my little bell—'"

I caught at that. "Did it ring your bell yesterday evening when I was here, and you went to the door?"

"Twice."

"Why, see," said I, "how your imagination misleads you. My eyes were on the bell, and my ears were open to the bell, and if I am a living man, it did not ring at those times. No, nor at any other time, except when it was rung in the natural course of physical things by the station communicating with you."

He shook his head. "I have never made a mistake as to that, yet, sir. I have never confused the spectre's ring with the man's. The ghost's ring is a strange vibration in the bell that it derives from nothing else, and I have not asserted that the bell stirs to the eye. I

don't wonder that you failed to hear it. But I heard it."

"And did the spectre seem to be there, when you looked out?"

"It was there."

"Both times?"

He repeated firmly: "Both times."

"Will you come to the door with me, and look for it now?"

He bit his under-lip as though he were somewhat unwilling, but arose. I opened the door, and stood on the step, while he stood in the doorway. There, was the Danger-light. There, was the dismal mouth of the tunnel. There, were the high wet stone walls of the cutting. There, were the stars above them.

"Do you see it?" I asked him, taking particular note of his face. His eyes were prominent and strained; but not very much more so, perhaps, than my own had been when I had directed them earnestly towards the same spot.

"No," he answered. "It is not there."

"Agreed," said I.

We went in again, shut the door, and resumed our seats. I was thinking how best to improve this advantage, if it might be called one, when he took up the conversation in such a matter of course way, so assuming that there could be no serious question of fact between us, that I felt myself placed in the weakest of positions.

"By this time you will fully understand, sir," he said, "that what troubles me so dreadfully, is the question, What does the spectre mean?"

I was not sure, I told him, that I did fully understand.

"What is its warning against?" he said, ruminating, with his eyes on the fire, and only by times turning them on me. "What is the danger? Where is the danger? There is danger overhanging, somewhere on the Line. Some dreadful calamity will happen. It is not to be doubted this third time, after what has gone before. But surely this is a cruel haunting of me. What can I do?"

He pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped the drops from his heated forehead.

"If I telegraph Danger, on either side of me, or on both, I can give no reason for it," he went on, wiping the palms of his hands. "I should get into trouble, and do no good. They would think I was mad. This is the way it would work:—Message: 'Danger! Take care!' Answer: 'What Danger? Where?' Message: 'Don't know. But for God's sake take care!' They would displace me. What else could they do?"

His pain of mind was most pitiable to see. It was the mental torture of a conscientious man, oppressed beyond endurance by an unintelligible responsibility involving life.

"When it first stood under the Danger-light," he went on, putting his dark hair back from his head, and drawing his hands outward across and across his temples in an extremity of feverish distress, "why not tell me where that accident was to happen—if it must happen? Why not tell me how it could be averted—if it could have

been averted? When on its second coming it hid its face, why not tell me instead: 'She is going to die. Let them keep her at home'? If it came, on those two occasions, only to show me that its warnings were true, and so to prepare me for the third, why not warn me plainly now? And I, Lord help me! A mere poor signalman on this solitary station! Why not go to somebody with credit to be believed, and power to act!"

When I saw him in this state, I saw that for the poor man's sake, as well as for the public safety, what I had to do for the time was, to compose his mind. Therefore, setting aside all question of reality or unreality between us, I represented to him that whoever thoroughly discharged his duty, must do well, and that at least it was his comfort that he understood his duty, though he did not understand these confounding Appearances. In this effort I succeeded far better than in the attempt to reason him out of his conviction. He became calm; the occupations incidental to his post as the night advanced, began to make larger demands on his attention; and I left him at two in the morning. I had offered to stay through the night, but he would not hear of it.

That I more than once looked back at the red light as I ascended the pathway, that I did not like the red light, and that I should have slept but poorly if my bed had been under it, I see no reason to conceal. Nor, did I like the two sequences of the accident and the dead girl. I see no reason to conceal that, either.

But, what ran most in my thoughts was the consideration how ought I to act, having become the recipient of this disclosure? I had proved the man to be intelligent, vigilant, painstaking, and exact; but how long might he remain so, in his state of mind? Though in a subordinate position, still he held a most important trust, and would I (for instance) like to stake my own life on the chances of his continuing to execute it with precision?

Unable to overcome a feeling that there would be something treacherous in my communicating what he had told me, to his superiors in the Company, without first being plain with himself and proposing a middle course to him, I ultimately resolved to offer to accompany him (otherwise keeping his secret for the present) to the wisest medical practitioner we could hear of in those parts, and to take his opinion. A change in his time of duty would come round next night, he had apprised me, and he would be off an hour or two after sunrise, and on again soon after sunset. I had appointed to return accordingly.

Next evening was a lovely evening, and I walked out early to enjoy it. The sun was not yet quite down when I traversed the field-path near the top of the deep cutting. I would extend my walk for an hour, I said to myself, half an hour on and half an hour back, and it would then be time to go to my signalman's box.

Before pursuing my stroll, I stepped to the brink, and mechanically looked down, from the point from which I had first seen him. I cannot describe the thrill that seized upon me,

when, close at the mouth of the tunnel, I saw the appearance of a man, with his left sleeve across his eyes, passionately waving his right arm.

The nameless horror that oppressed me, passed in a moment, for in a moment I saw that this appearance of a man was a man indeed, and that there was a little group of other men standing at a short distance, to whom he seemed to be rehearsing the gesture he made. The Danger-light was not yet lighted. Against its shaft, a little low hut, entirely new to me, had been made of some wooden supports and tarpaulin. It looked no bigger than a bed.

With an irresistible sense that something was wrong—with a flashing self-reproachful fear that fatal mischief had come of my leaving the man there, and causing no one to be sent to overlook or correct what he did—I descended the notched path with all the speed I could make.

"What is the matter?" I asked the men.

"Signalman killed this morning, sir."

"Not the man belonging to that box?"

"Yes, sir."

"Not the man I know?"

"You will recognise him, sir, if you knew him," said the man who spoke for the others, solemnly uncovering his own head and raising an end of the tarpaulin, "for his face is quite composed."

"O! how did this happen, how did this happen?" I asked, turning from one to another as the hut closed in again.

"He was cut down by an engine, sir. No man in England knew his work better. But somehow he was not clear of the outer rail. It was just at broad day. He had struck the light, and had the lamp in his hand. As the engine came out of the tunnel, his back was towards her, and she cut him down. That man drove her, and was showing how it happened. Show the gentleman, Tom."

The man, who wore a rough dark dress, stepped back to his former place at the mouth of the tunnel:

"Coming round the curve in the tunnel, sir," he said, "I saw him at the end, like as if I saw him down a perspective-glass. There was no time to check speed, and I knew him to be very careful. As he didn't seem to take heed of the whistle, I shut it off when we were running down upon him, and called to him as loud as I could call."

"What did you say?"

"I said, Below there! Look out! Look out! For God's sake clear the way!"

I started.

"Ah! it was a dreadful time, sir. I never left off calling to him. I put this arm before my eyes, not to see, and I waved this arm to the last; but it was no use."

Without prolonging the narrative to dwell on any one of its curious circumstances more than on any other, I may, in closing it, point out the coincidence that the warning of the Engine-Driver included, not only the words which the unfortunate Signalman had repeated to me as haunting him, but also the words

which I myself—not he—had attached, and that only in my own mind, to the gesticulation he had imitated.

No. 2 BRANCH LINE.

THE ENGINE-DRIVER.

"Altogether? Well. Altogether, since 1841, I've killed seven men and boys. It ain't many in all those years."

These startling words he uttered in a serious tone as he leaned against the Station-wall. He was a thick-set, ruddy-faced man, with coal-black eyes, the whites of which were not white, but a brownish-yellow, and apparently scarred and seamed, as if they had been operated upon. They were eyes that had worked hard in looking through wind and weather. He was dressed in a short black pea-jacket and grimy white canvas trousers, and wore on his head a flat black cap. There was no sign of levity in his face. His look was serious even to sadness, and there was an air of responsibility about his whole bearing which assured me that he spoke in earnest.

"Yes, sir, I have been for five-and-twenty years a Locomotive Engine-driver; and in all that time, I've only killed seven men and boys. There's not many of my mates as can say as much for themselves. Steadiness, sir—steadiness and keeping your eyes open, is what does it. When I say seven men and boys, I mean my mates—stokers, porters, and so forth. I don't count passengers."

How did he become an engine-driver?

"My father," he said, "was a wheelwright in a small way, and lived in a little cottage by the side of the railway which runs betwixt Leeds and Selby. It was the second railway laid down in the kingdom, the second after the Liverpool and Manchester, where Mr. Huskisson was killed, as you may have heard on, sir. When the trains rushed by, we young 'uns used to run out to look at 'em, and hooray. I noticed the driver turning handles, and making it go, and I thought to myself it would be a fine thing to be a engine-driver, and have the control of a wonderful machine like that. Before the railway, the driver of the mail-coach was the biggest man I knew. I thought I should like to be the driver of a coach. We had a picture in our cottage of George the Third in a red coat. I always mixed up the driver of the mail-coach—who had a red coat, too—with the king, only he had a low-crowned broad-brimmed hat, which the king hadn't. In my idea, the king couldn't be a greater man than the driver of the mail-coach. I had always a fancy to be a head man of some kind. When I went to Leeds once, and saw a man conducting an orchestra, I thought I should like to be the conductor of an orchestra. When I went home I made myself a bâton, and went about the fields conducting an orchestra. It wasn't there, of course, but I pretended it was. At another time, a man with a whip and a speaking-trumpet, on the stage outside a show, took my fancy, and I thought I should like to be him. But when the train came, the engine-

driver put them all in the shade, and I was resolved to be a engine-driver. It wasn't long before I had to do something to earn my own living, though I was only a young 'un. My father died suddenly—he was killed by thunder and lightning while standing under a tree out of the rain—and mother couldn't keep us all. The day after my father's burial I walked down to the station, and said I wanted to be a engine-driver. The station-master laughed a bit, said I was for beginning early, but that I was not quite big enough yet. He gave me a penny, and told me to go home and grow, and come again in ten years' time. I didn't dream of danger then. If I couldn't be a engine-driver, I was determined to have something to do about a engine; so, as I could get nothing else, I went on board a Humber steamer, and broke up coals for the stoker. That was how I began. From that, I became a stoker, first on board a boat, and then on a locomotive. Then, after two years' service, I became a driver on the very Line which passed our cottage. My mother and my brothers and sisters came out to look at me, the first day I drove. I was watching for them and they was watching for me, and they waved their hands and hoor'a'd, and I waved my hand to them. I had the steam well up, and was going at a rattling pace, and rare proud I was that minute. Never was so proud in my life!

"When a man has a liking for a thing it's as good as being clever. In a very short time I became one of the best drivers on the Line. That was allowed. I took a pride in it, you see, and liked it. No, I didn't know much about the engine scientifically, as you call it; but I could put her to rights if anything went out of gear—that is to say, if there was nothing broken—but I couldn't have explained how the steam worked inside. Starting a engine, it just like drawing a drop of gin. You turn a handle and off she goes; then you turn the handle the other way, put on the brakes, and you stop her. There's not much more in it, so far. It's no good being scientific and knowing the principle of the engine inside; no good at all. Fitters, who know all the ins and outs of the engine, make the worst drivers. That's well known. They know too much. It's just as I've heard of a man with regard to *his* inside: if he knew what a complicated machine it is, he would never eat, or drink, or dance, or run, or do anything, for fear of busting something. So it is with fitters. But us as are not troubled with such thoughts, *we* go ahead.

"But starting a engine's one thing and driving of her is another. Any one, a child a'most, can turn on the steam and turn it off again; but it ain't every one that can keep a engine well on the road, no more than it ain't every one who can ride a horse properly. It is much the same thing. If you gallop a horse right off for a mile or two, you take the wind out of him, and for the next mile or two you must let him trot or walk. So it is with a engine. If you put on too much steam, to get over the ground at the start,

you exhaust the boiler, and then you'll have to crawl along till your fresh water boils up. The great thing in driving, is, to go steady, never to let your water get too low, nor your fire too low. It's the same with a kettle. If you fill it up when it's about half empty, it soon comes to the boil again; but if you don't fill it up until the water's nearly out, it's a long time in coming to the boil again. Another thing; you should never make spurts, unless you are detained and lose time. You should go up a incline and down a incline at the same pace. Sometimes a driver will waste his steam, and when he comes to a hill he has scarcely enough to drag him up. When you're in a train that goes by fits and starts, you may be sure that there is a bad driver on the engine. That kind of driving frightens passengers dreadful. When the train, after rattling along, suddenly slackens speed when it ain't near a station, it may be in the middle of a tunnel, the passengers think there is danger. But generally it's because the driver has exhausted his steam.

"I drove the Brighton express, four or five years before I come here, and the annuals—that is, the passengers who had annual tickets—always said they knew when I was on the engine, because they wasn't jerked. Gentlemen used to say as they came on to the platform, 'Who drives to-day—Jim Martin?' And when the guard told them yes, they said 'All right,' and took their seats quite comfortable. But the driver never gets so much as a shilling; the guard comes in for all that, and he does nothing much. Few ever think of the driver. I dare say they think the train goes along of itself; yet if we didn't keep a sharp look-out, know our duty, and do it, they might all go smash at any moment. I used to make that journey to Brighton in fifty-two minutes. The papers said forty-nine minutes, but that was coming it a little too strong. I had to watch signals all the way, one every two miles, so that me and my stoker were on the stretch all the time, doing two things at once—attending to the engine and looking out. I've driven on this Line, eighty-one miles and three-quarters, in eighty-six minutes. There's no danger in speed if you have a good road, a good engine, and not too many coaches behind. No, we don't call them carriages, we call them 'coaches.'

"Yes; oscillation means danger. If you're ever in a coach that oscillates much, tell of it at the first station and get it coupled up closer. Coaches when they're too loose are apt to jump, or swing off the rails; and it's quite as dangerous when they're coupled up too close. There ought to be just space enough for the buffers to work easy. Passengers are frightened in tunnels, but there's less danger, *now*, in tunnels than anywhere else. We never enter a tunnel unless it's signalled Clear.

"A train can be stopped wonderful quick, even when running express, if the guards act with the driver and clap on all the brakes promptly. Much depends upon the guards. One brake behind, is as good as two in front.

The engine, you see, loses weight as she burns her coals and consumes her water, but the coaches behind don't alter. We have a good deal of trouble with young guards. In their anxiety to perform their duties; they put on the brakes too soon, so that sometimes we can scarcely drag the train into the station; when they grow older at it they are not so anxious, and don't put them on soon enough. It's no use to say, when an accident happens, that they did not put on the brakes in time; they swear they did, and you can't prove that they didn't.

"Do I think that the tapping of the wheels with a hammer is a mere ceremony? Well, I don't know exactly; I should not like to say. It's not often that the chaps find anything wrong. They may sometimes be half asleep when a train comes into a station in the middle of the night. You would be yourself. They ought to tap the axle-box, but they don't.

"Many accidents take place that never get into the papers; many trains, full of passengers, escape being dashed to pieces by next door to a miracle. Nobody knows anything about it but the driver and the stoker. I remember once, when I was driving on the Eastern Counties. Going round a curve, I suddenly saw a train coming along on the same line of rails. I clapped on the brake, but it was too late, I thought. Seeing the engine almost close upon us, I cried to my stoker to jump. He jumped off the engine, almost before the words were out of my mouth. I was just taking my hand off the lever to follow, when the coming train turned off on the points, and the next instant the hind coach passed my engine by a shave. It was the nearest touch I ever saw. My stoker was killed. In another half second I should have jumped off and been killed too. What would have become of the train without us is more than I can tell you.

"There are heaps of people run over that no one ever hears about. One dark night in the Black Country, me and my mate felt something wet and warm splash in our faces. 'That didn't come from the engine, Bill,' I said. 'No,' he said; 'it's something thick, Jim.' It was blood. That's what it was. We heard afterwards that a collier had been run over. When we kill any of our own chaps, we say as little about it as possible. It's generally—mostly always—their own fault. No, we never think of danger ourselves. We're used to it, you see. But we're not reckless. I don't believe there's any body of men that takes more pride in their work than engine-drivers do. We are as proud and as fond of our engines as if they were living things; as proud of them as a huntsman or a jockey is of his horse. And a engine has almost as many ways as a horse; she's a kicker, a plunger, a roarer, or what not, in her way. Put a stranger on to my engine, and he wouldn't know what to do with her. Yes; there's wonderful improvements in engines since the last great Exhibition. Some of them take up their water without stopping. That's a wonderful invention, and yet as simple

as A B C. There are water-toughs at certain places, lying between the rails. By moving a lever you let down the mouth of a scoop into the water, and as you rush along the water is forced into the tank, at the rate of three thousand gallons a minute.

"A engine-driver's chief anxiety is to keep time; that's what he thinks most of. When I was driving the Brighton express, I always felt like as if I was riding a race against time. I had no fear of the pace; what I feared was losing way, and not getting in to the minute. We have to give in an account of our time when we arrive. The company provides us with watches, and we go by them. Before starting on a journey, we pass through a room to be inspected. That's to see if we are sober. But they don't say nothing to us, and a man who was a little gone might pass easy. I've known a stoker that had passed the inspection, come on to the engine as drunk as a fly, flop down among the coals, and sleep there like a log for the whole run. I had to be my own stoker then. If you ask me if engine-drivers are drinking men, I must answer you that they are pretty well. It's trying work; one half of you cold as ice; t'other half hot as fire; wet one minute, dry the next. If ever a man had an excuse for drinking, that man's a engine-driver. And yet I don't know if ever a driver goes upon his engine drunk. If he was to, the wind would soon sober him.

"I believe engine-drivers, as a body, are the healthiest fellows alive; but they don't live long. The cause of that, I believe to be the cold food, and the shaking. By the cold food, I mean that a engine-driver never gets his meals comfortable. He's never at home to his dinner. When he starts away the first thing in the morning, he takes a bit of cold meat and a piece of bread with him for his dinner; and generally he has to eat it in the shed, for he mustn't leave his engine. You can understand how the jolting and shaking knocks a man up, after a bit. The insurance companies won't take us at ordinary rates. We're obliged to be Foresters, or Old Friends, or that sort of thing, where they ain't so particular. The wages of a engine-driver average about eight shillings a day, but if he's a good schemer with his coals—yes, I mean if he economises his coals—he's allowed so much more. Some will make from five to ten shillings a week that way. I don't complain of the wages particular; but it's hard lines for such as us, to have to pay income-tax. The company gives an account of all our wages, and we have to pay. It's a shame.

"Our domestic life—our life at home, you mean? Well, as to that, we don't see much of our families. I leave home at half-past seven in the morning, and don't get back again until half-past nine, or maybe later. The children are not up when I leave, and they've gone to bed again before I come home. This is about my day:—Leave London at 8.45; drive for four hours and a half; cold snack on the engine

step; see to engine; drive back again; clean engine; report myself; and home. Twelve hours' hard and anxious work, and no comfortable victuals. Yes, our wives are anxious about us; for we never know when we go out, if we'll ever come back again. We ought to go home the minute we leave the station, and report ourselves to those that are thinking on us and depending on us; but I'm afraid we don't always. Perhaps we go first to the public-house, and perhaps you would, too, if you were in charge of a engine all day long. But the wives have a way of their own, of finding out if we're all right. They inquire among each other. 'Have you seen my Jim?' one says. 'No,' says another, 'but Jack see him coming out of the station half an hour ago.' Then she knows that her Jim's all right, and knows where to find him if she wants him. It's a sad thing when any of us have to carry bad news to a mate's wife. None of us likes that job. I remember when Jack Davidge was killed, none of us could face his poor missus with the news. She had seven children, poor thing, and two of 'em, the youngest, was down with the fever. We got old Mrs. Berridge—Tom Berridge's mother—to break it to her. But she knew summat was the matter, the minute the old woman went in, and, afore she spoke a word, fell down like as if she was dead. She lay all night like that, and never heard from mortal lips until next morning that her George was killed. But she knew it in her heart. It's a pith and toss kind of a life ours!

"And yet I never was nervous on a engine but once. I never think of my own life. You go in for staking that, when you begin, and you get used to the risk. I never think of the passengers either. The thoughts of a engine-driver never go behind his engine. If he keeps his engine all right, the coaches behind will be all right, as far as the driver is concerned. But once I *did* think of the passengers. My little boy, Bill, was among them that morning. He was a poor little cripple fellow that we all loved more nor the others, because he *was* a cripple, and so quiet, and wise-like. He was going down to his aunt in the country, who was to take care of him for a while. We thought the country air would do him good. I did think there were lives behind me that morning; at least, I thought hard of one little life that was in my hands. There were twenty coaches on; my little Bill seemed to me to be in every one of 'em. My hand trembled as I turned on the steam. I felt my heart thumping as we drew close to the pointsman's box; as we neared the Junction, I was all in a cold sweat. At the end of the first fifty miles I was nearly eleven minutes behind time. 'What's the matter with you this morning?' my stoker said. 'Did you have a drop too much last night?' 'Don't speak to me, Fred,' I said, 'till we get to Peterborough; and keep a sharp look-out, there's a good fellow.' I never was so thankful in my life as when I shut off steam to enter the station at Peterborough. Little Bill's aunt was waiting for him, and I saw her lift him out of the carriage. I

called out to her to bring him to me, and I took him upon the engine and kissed him—ah, twenty times I should think—making him in such a mess with grease and coal-dust as you never saw.

"I was all right for the rest of the journey. And I do believe, sir, the passengers were safer after little Bill was gone. It would never do, you see, for engine-drivers to know too much, or to feel too much."

No. 3 BRANCH LINE. THE COMPENSATION HOUSE.

"There's not a looking-glass in all the house, sir. It's some peculiar fancy of my master's. There isn't one in any single room in the house."

It was a dark and gloomy-looking building, and had been purchased by this Company for an enlargement of their Goods Station. The value of the house had been referred to what was popularly called "a compensation jury," and the house was called, in consequence, The Compensation House. It had become the Company's property; but its tenant still remained in possession, pending the commencement of active building operations. My attention was originally drawn to this house because it stood directly in front of a collection of huge pieces of timber which lay near this part of the Line, and on which I sometimes sat for half an hour at a time, when I was tired by my wanderings about Mugby Junction.

It was square, cold, grey-looking, built of rough-hewn stone, and roofed with thin slabs of the same material. Its windows were few in number, and very small for the size of the building. In the great blank, grey broadside, there were only four windows. The entrance-door was in the middle of the house; there was a window on either side of it, and there were two more in the single story above. The blinds were all closely drawn, and, when the door was shut, the dreary building gave no sign of life or occupation.

But the door was not always shut. Sometimes it was opened from within, with a great jingling of bolts and door-chains, and then a man would come forward and stand upon the doorstep, snuffing the air as one might do who was ordinarily kept on rather a small allowance of that element. He was stout, thickset, and perhaps fifty or sixty years old—a man whose hair was cut exceedingly close, who wore a large bushy beard, and whose eye had a sociable twinkle in it which was prepossessing. He was dressed, whenever I saw him, in a greenish-brown frock-coat made of some material which was not cloth, wore a waistcoat and trousers of light colour, and had a frill to his shirt—an ornament, by the way, which did not seem to go at all well with the beard, which was continually in contact with it. It was the custom of this worthy person, after standing for a short time on the threshold inhaling the air, to come forward into the road, and, after glancing at one of the upper windows in a half mechanical way, to cross over to the logs, and, leaning over the fence which guarded

the railway, to look up and down the Line (it passed before the house) with the air of a man accomplishing a self-imposed task of which nothing was expected to come. This done, he would cross the road again, and turning on the threshold to take a final sniff of air, disappeared once more within the house, bolting and chaining the door again as if there were no probability of its being reopened for at least a week. Yet half an hour had not passed before he was out in the road again, sniffing the air and looking up and down the Line as before.

It was not very long before I managed to scrape acquaintance with this restless personage. I soon found out that my friend with the shirt-frill was the confidential servant, butler, valet, factotum, what you will, of a sick gentleman, a Mr. Oswald Strange, who had recently come to inhabit the house opposite, and concerning whose history my new acquaintance, whose name I ascertained was Masey, seemed disposed to be somewhat communicative. His master, it appeared, had come down to this place, partly for the sake of reducing his establishment—not, Mr. Masey was swift to inform me, on economical principles, but because the poor gentleman, for particular reasons, wished to have few dependents about him—partly in order that he might be near his old friend, Dr. Garden, who was established in the neighbourhood, and whose society and advice were necessary to Mr. Strange's life. That life was, it appeared, held by this suffering gentleman on a precarious tenure. It was ebbing away fast with each passing hour. The servant already spoke of his master in the past tense, describing him to me as a young gentleman not more than five-and-thirty years of age, with a young face, as far as the features and build of it went, but with an expression which had nothing of youth about it. This was the great peculiarity of the man. At a distance he looked younger than he was by many years, and strangers, at the time when he had been used to get about, always took him for a man of seven or eight-and-twenty, but they changed their minds on getting nearer to him. Old Masey had a way of his own of summing up the peculiarities of his master, repeating twenty times over: "Sir, he was Strange by name, and Strange by nature, and Strange to look at into the bargain."

It was during my second or third interview with the old fellow that he uttered the words quoted at the beginning of this plain narrative.

"Not such a thing as a looking-glass in all the house," the old man said, standing beside my piece of timber, and looking across reflectively at the house opposite. "Not one."

"In the sitting-rooms, I suppose you mean?"

"No, sir, I mean sitting-rooms and bedrooms both; there isn't so much as a shaving-glass as big as the palm of your hand anywhere."

"But how is it?" I asked. "Why are there no looking-glasses in any of the rooms?"

"Ah, sir!" replied Masey, "that's what none of us can ever tell. There is the mystery. It's

just a fancy on the part of my master. He had some strange fancies, and this was one of them. A pleasant gentleman he was to live with, as any servant could desire. A liberal gentleman, and one who gave but little trouble; always ready with a kind word, and a kind deed, too, for the matter of that. There was not a house in all the parish of St. George's (in which we lived before we came down here) where the servants had more holidays or a better table kept; but, for all that, he had his queer ways and his fancies, as I may call them, and this was one of them. And the point he made of it, sir," the old man went on; "the extent to which that regulation was enforced, whenever a new servant was engaged; and the changes in the establishment it occasioned! In hiring a new servant, the very first stipulation made, was that about the looking-glasses. It was one of my duties to explain the thing, as far as it could be explained, before any servant was taken into the house. 'You'll find it an easy place,' I used to say, 'with a liberal table, good wages, and a deal of leisure; but there's one thing you must make up your mind to; you must do without looking-glasses while you're here, for there isn't one in the house, and, what's more, there never will be.'"

"But how did you know there never would be one?" I asked.

"Lor' bless you, sir! If you'd seen and heard all that I'd seen and heard, you could have no doubt about it. Why, only to take one instance:—I remember a particular day when my master had occasion to go into the housekeeper's room, where the cook lived, to see about some alterations that were making, and when a pretty scene took place. The cook—she was a very ugly woman, and awful vain—had left a little bit of a looking-glass, about six inches square, upon the chimney-piece; she had got it surreptitious, and kept it always locked up; but she'd left it out, being called away suddenly, while titivating her hair. I had seen the glass, and was making for the chimney-piece as fast as I could; but master came in front of it before I could get there, and it was all over in a moment. He gave one long piercing look into it, turned deadly pale, and seizing the glass, dashed it into a hundred pieces on the floor, and then stamped upon the fragments and ground them into powder with his feet. He shut himself up for the rest of that day in his own room, first ordering me to discharge the cook, then and there, at a moment's notice."

"What an extraordinary thing!" I said, pondering.

"Ah, sir," continued the old man, "it was astonishing what trouble I had with those women-servants. It was difficult to get any that would take the place at all under the circumstances. 'What not so much as a mossul to do one's 'air at?' they would say, and they'd go off, in spite of extra wages. Then those who did consent to come, what lies they would tell, to be sure! They would protest that they didn't want to look in the glass, that they never

had been in the habit of looking in the glass, and all the while that very wench would have her looking-glass, of some kind or another, hid away among her clothes up-stairs. Sooner or later, she would bring it out too, and leave it about somewhere or other (just like the cook), where it was as likely as not that master might see it. And then—for girls like that have no consciences, sir—when I had caught one of 'em at it, she'd turn round as bold as brass, 'And how am I to know whether my 'air's parted straight?' she'd say, just as if it hadn't been considered in her wages that that was the very thing which she never *was* to know while she lived in our house. A vain lot, sir, and the ugly ones always the vainest. There was no end to their dodges. They'd have looking-glasses in the interiors of their workbox-lids, where it was next to impossible that I could find 'em, or inside the covers of hymn-books, or cookery-books, or in their eaddies. I recollect one girl, a sly one she was, and marked with the small-pox terrible, who was always reading her prayer-book at odd times. Sometimes I used to think what a religious mind she'd got, and at other times (depending on the mood I was in) I would conclude that it was the marriage-service she was studying; but one day, when I got behind her to satisfy my doubts—lo and behold! it was the old story: a bit of glass, without a frame, fastened into the kiver with the outside edges of the sheets of postage-stamps. Dodges! Why they'd keep their looking-glasses in the scullery or the coal-cellar, or leave them in charge of the servants next door, or with the milk-woman round the corner; but have 'em they would. "And I don't mind confessing, sir," said the old man, bringing his long speech to an end, "that it *was* an inconvenience not to have so much as a scrap to shave before. I used to go to the barber's at first, but I soon gave that up, and took to wearing my beard as my master did; likewise to keeping my hair"—Mr. Masey touched his head as he spoke—"so short, that it didn't require any parting, before or behind."

I sat for some time lost in amazement, and staring at my companion. My curiosity was powerfully stimulated, and the desire to learn more was very strong within me.

"Had your master any personal defect," I inquired, "which might have made it distressing to him to see his own image reflected?"

"By no means, sir," said the old man. "He was as handsome a gentleman as you would wish to see: a little delicate-looking and careworn, perhaps, with a very pale face; but as free from any deformity as you or I, sir. No, sir, no; it was nothing of that."

"Then what was it? What is it?" I asked, desperately. "Is there no one who is, or has been, in your master's confidence?"

"Yes, sir," said the old fellow, with his eyes turning to that window opposite. "There is one person who knows all my master's secrets, and this secret among the rest."

"And who is that?"

The old man turned round and looked at me fixedly. "The doctor here," he said. "Dr. Garden. My master's very old friend."

"I should like to speak with this gentleman," I said, involuntarily.

"He is with my master now," answered Masey. "He will be coming out presently, and I think I may say he will answer any question you may like to put to him." As the old man spoke, the door of the house opened, and a middle-aged gentleman, who was tall and thin, but who lost something of his height by a habit of stooping, appeared on the step. Old Masey left me in a moment. He muttered something about taking the doctor's directions, and hastened across the road. The tall gentleman spoke to him for a minute or two very seriously, probably about the patient up-stairs, and it then seemed to me from their gestures that I myself was the subject of some further conversation between them. At all events, when old Masey retired into the house, the doctor came across to where I was standing, and addressed me with a very agreeable smile.

"John Masey tells me that you are interested in the case of my poor friend, sir. I am now going back to my house, and if you don't mind the trouble of walking with me, I shall be happy to enlighten you as far as I am able."

I hastened to make my apologies and express my acknowledgments, and we set off together. When we had reached the doctor's house and were seated in his study, I ventured to inquire after the health of this poor gentleman.

"I am afraid there is no amendment, nor any prospect of amendment," said the doctor. "Old Masey has told you something of his strange condition, has he not?"

"Yes, he has told me something," I answered, "and he says you know all about it."

Dr. Garden looked very grave. "I don't know all about it. I only know what happens when he comes into the presence of a looking-glass. But as to the circumstances which have led to his being haunted in the strangest fashion that I ever heard of, I know no more of them than you do."

"Haunted?" I repeated. "And in the strangest fashion that you ever heard of?"

Dr. Garden smiled at my eagerness, seemed to be collecting his thoughts, and presently went on:

"I made the acquaintance of Mr. Oswald Strange in a curious way. It was on board of an Italian steamer, bound from Civita Vecchia to Marseilles. We had been travelling all night. In the morning I was shaving myself in the cabin, when suddenly this man came behind me, glanced for a moment into the small mirror before which I was standing, and then, without a word of warning, tore it from the nail, and dashed it to pieces at my feet. His face was at first livid with passion—it seemed to me rather the passion of fear than of anger—but it changed after a moment, and he seemed ashamed of what he had done. Well," con-

tinued the doctor, relapsing for a moment into a smile, "of course I was in a devil of a rage. I was operating on my under-jaw, and the start the thing gave me caused me to cut myself. Besides, altogether it seemed an outrageous and insolent thing, and I gave it to poor Strange in a style of language which I am sorry to think of now, but which, I hope, was excusable at the time. As to the offender himself, his confusion and regret, now that his passion was at an end, disarmed me. He sent for the steward, and paid most liberally for the damage done to the steam-boat property, explaining to him, and to some other passengers who were present in the cabin, that what had happened had been accidental. For me, however, he had another explanation. Perhaps he felt that I must know it to have been no accident—perhaps he really wished to confide in some one. At all events, he owned to me that what he had done was done under the influence of an uncontrollable impulse—a seizure which took him, he said, at times—something like a fit. He begged my pardon, and entreated that I would endeavour to disassociate him personally from this action, of which he was heartily ashamed. Then he attempted a sickly joke, poor fellow, about his wearing a beard, and feeling a little spiteful, in consequence, when he saw other people taking the trouble to shave; but he said nothing about any infirmity or delusion, and shortly after left me.

"In my professional capacity I could not help taking some interest in Mr. Strange. I did not altogether lose sight of him after our sea-journey to Marseilles was over. I found him a pleasant companion up to a certain point; but I always felt that there was a reserve about him. He was uncommunicative about his past life, and especially would never allude to anything connected with his travels or his residence in Italy, which, however, I could make out had been a long one. He spoke Italian well, and seemed familiar with the country, but disliked to talk about it.

"During the time we spent together there were seasons when he was so little himself, that I, with a pretty large experience, was almost afraid to be with him. His attacks were violent and sudden in the last degree; and there was one most extraordinary feature connected with them all:—some horrible association of ideas took possession of him whenever he found himself before a looking-glass. And after we had travelled together for a time, I dreaded the sight of a mirror hanging harmlessly against a wall, or a toilet-glass standing on a dressing-table, almost as much as he did.

"Poor Strange was not always affected in the same manner by a looking-glass. Sometimes it seemed to madden him with fury; at other times, it appeared to turn him to stone: remaining motionless and speechless as if attacked by catalepsy. One night—the worst things always happen at night, and oftener than one would think on stormy nights—we arrived at a small town in the central district of Au-

vergne: a place but little known, out of the line of railways, and to which we had been drawn, partly by the antiquarian attractions which the place possessed, and partly by the beauty of the scenery. The weather had been rather against us. The day had been dull and murky, the heat stifling, and the sky had threatened mischief since the morning. At sundown, these threats were fulfilled. The thunderstorm, which had been all day coming up—as it seemed to us, against the wind—burst over the place where we were lodged, with very great violence.

"There are some practical-minded persons with strong constitutions, who deny roundly that their fellow-creatures are, or can be, affected, in mind or body, by atmospheric influences. I am not a disciple of that school, simply because I cannot believe that those changes of weather, which have so much effect upon animals, and even on inanimate objects, can fail to have some influence on a piece of machinery so sensitive and intricate as the human frame. I think, then, that it was in part owing to the disturbed state of the atmosphere that, on this particular evening I felt nervous and depressed. When my new friend Strange and I parted for the night, I felt as little disposed to go to rest as I ever did in my life. The thunder was still lingering among the mountains in the midst of which our inn was placed. Sometimes it seemed nearer, and at other times further off; but it never left off altogether, except for a few minutes at a time. I was quite unable to shake off a succession of painful ideas which persistently besieged my mind.

"It is hardly necessary to add that I thought from time to time of my travelling-companion in the next room. His image was almost continually before me. He had been dull and depressed all the evening, and when we parted for the night there was a look in his eyes which I could not get out of my memory.

"There was a door between our rooms, and the partition dividing them was not very solid; and yet I had heard no sound since I parted from him which could indicate that he was there at all, much less that he was awake and stirring. I was in a mood, sir, which made this silence terrible to me, and so many foolish fancies—as that he was lying there dead, or in a fit, or what not—took possession of me, that at last I could bear it no longer. I went to the door, and, after listening, very attentively but quite in vain, for any sound, I at last knocked pretty sharply. There was no answer. Feeling that longer suspense would be unendurable, I, without more ceremony, turned the handle and went in.

"It was a great bare room, and so imperfectly lighted by a single candle that it was almost impossible—except when the lightning flashed—to see into its great dark corners. A small rickety bedstead stood against one of the walls, shrouded by yellow cotton curtains, passed through a great iron ring in the ceiling. There was, for all other furniture, an old chest of drawers which served also as a washing-stand,

having a small basin and ewer and a single towel arranged on the top of it. There were, moreover, two ancient chairs and a dressing-table. On this last, stood a large old-fashioned looking-glass with a carved frame.

"I must have seen all these things, because I remember them so well now, but I do not know how I could have seen them, for it seems to me that, from the moment of my entering that room, the action of my senses and of the faculties of my mind was held fast by the ghastly figure which stood motionless before the looking-glass in the middle of the empty room.

"How terrible it was! The weak light of one candle standing on the table shone upon Strange's face, lighting it from below, and throwing (as I now remember) his shadow, vast and black, upon the wall behind him and upon the ceiling overhead. He was leaning rather forward, with his hands upon the table supporting him, and gazing into the glass which stood before him with a horrible fixity. The sweat was on his white face; his rigid features and his pale lips showed in that feeble light were horrible, more than words can tell, to look at. He was so completely stupified and lost, that the noise I had made in knocking and in entering the room was unobserved by him. Not even when I called him loudly by name did he move or did his face change.

"What a vision of horror that was, in the great dark empty room, in a silence that was something more than negative, that ghastly figure frozen into stone by some unexplained terror! And the silence and the stillness! The very thunder had ceased now. My heart stood still with fear. Then, moved by some instinctive feeling, under whose influence I acted mechanically, I crept with slow steps nearer and nearer to the table, and at last, half expecting to see some spectre even more horrible than this which I saw already, I looked over his shoulder into the looking-glass. I happened to touch his arm, though only in the lightest manner. In that one moment the spell which had held him—who knows how long?—enchained, seemed broken, and he lived in this world again. He turned round upon me, as suddenly as a tiger makes its spring, and seized me by the arm.

"I have told you that even before I entered my friend's room I had felt, all that night, depressed and nervous. The necessity for action at this time was, however, so obvious, and this man's agony made all that I had felt, appear so trifling, that much of my own discomfort seemed to leave me. I felt that I *must* be strong.

"The face before me almost unmanned me. The eyes which looked into mine were so scared with terror, the lips—if I may say so—looked so speechless. The wretched man gazed long into my face, and then, still holding me by the arm, slowly, very slowly, turned his head. I had gently tried to move him away from the looking-glass, but he would not stir, and now he was looking into it as fixedly as ever. I could bear this no longer, and, using

such force as was necessary, I drew him gradually away, and got him to one of the chairs at the foot of the bed. 'Come!' I said—after the long silence my voice, even to myself, sounded strange and hollow—'come! You are over-tired, and you feel the weather. Don't you think you ought to be in bed? Suppose you lie down. Let me try my medical skill in mixing you a composing draught.'

"He held my hand, and looked eagerly into my eyes. 'I am better now,' he said, speaking at last very faintly. Still he looked at me in that wistful way. It seemed as if there were something that he wanted to do or say, but had not sufficient resolution. At length he got up from the chair to which I had led him, and beckoning me to follow him, went across the room to the dressing-table, and stood again before the glass. A violent shudder passed through his frame as he looked into it; but apparently forcing himself to go through with what he had now begun, he remained where he was, and, without looking away, moved to me with his hand to come and stand beside him. I complied.

"'Look in there!' he said, in an almost inaudible tone. He was supported, as before, by his hands resting on the table, and could only bow with his head towards the glass to intimate what he meant. 'Look in there!' he repeated.

"I did as he asked me.

"'What do you see?' he asked next.

"'See?' I repeated, trying to speak as cheerfully as I could, and describing the reflexion of his own face as nearly as I could. 'I see a very, very pale face with sunken cheeks—'

"'What?' he cried, with an alarm in his voice which I could not understand.

"'With sunken cheeks,' I went on, 'and two hollow eyes with large pupils.'

"I saw the reflexion of my friend's face change, and felt his hand clutch my arm even more tightly than he had done before. I stopped abruptly and looked round at him. He did not turn his head towards me, but, gazing still into the looking-glass, seemed to labour for utterance.

"'What,' he stammered at last. 'Do—you—see it—too?'

"'See what?' I asked, quickly.

"'That face!' he cried, in accents of horror. 'That face—which is not mine—and which—I SEE INSTEAD OF MINE—always!'

"I was struck speechless by the words. In a moment this mystery was explained—but what an explanation! Worse, a hundred times worse, than anything I had imagined. What! Had this man lost the power of seeing his own image as it was reflected there before him? and, in its place, was there the image of another? Had he changed reflexions with some other man? The frightfulness of the thought struck me speechless for a time—then I saw how false an impression my silence was conveying.

"'No, no, no!' I cried, as soon as I could speak—a hundred times, no! I see you, of

course, and only you. It was your face I attempted to describe, and no other."

"He seemed not to hear me. 'Why, look there!', he said, in a low, indistinct voice, pointing to his own image in the glass. 'Whose face do you see there?'"

"'Why yours, of course.' And then, after a moment, I added, 'Whose do you see?'"

"He answered, like one in a trance, 'His—only his—always his!' He stood still a moment, and then, with a loud and terrific scream, repeated those words, 'ALWAYS HIS, ALWAYS HIS,' and fell down in a fit before me.

"I knew what to do now. Here was a thing which, at any rate, I could understand. I had with me my usual small stock of medicines and surgical instruments, and I did what was necessary: first to restore my unhappy patient, and next to procure for him the rest he needed so much. He was very ill—at death's door for some days—and I could not leave him, though there was urgent need that I should be back in London. When he began to mend, I sent over to England for my servant—John Masey—whom I knew I could trust. Acquainting him with the outlines of the case, I left him in charge of my patient, with orders that he should be brought over to this country as soon as he was fit to travel.

"That awful scene was always before me. I saw this devoted man day after day, with the eyes of my imagination, sometimes destroying in his rage the harmless looking-glass, which was the immediate cause of his suffering, sometimes transfixed before the horrid image that turned him to stone. I recollect coming upon him once when we were stopping at a roadside inn, and seeing him stand so by broad daylight. His back was turned towards me, and I waited and watched him for nearly half an hour as he stood there motionless and speechless, and appearing not to breathe. I am not sure but that this apparition seen so by daylight was more ghastly than that apparition seen in the middle of the night, with the thunder rumbling among the hills.

"Back in London in his own house, where he could command in some sort the objects which should surround him, poor Strange was better than he would have been elsewhere. He seldom went out except at night, but once or twice I have walked with him by daylight, and have seen him terribly agitated when we have had to pass a shop in which looking-glasses were exposed for sale.

"It is nearly a year now since my poor friend followed me down to this place, to which I have retired. For some months he has been daily getting weaker and weaker, and a disease of the lungs has become developed in him, which has brought him to his death-bed. I should add, by-the-by, that John Masey has been his constant companion ever since I brought them together, and I have had, consequently, to look after a new servant.

"And now tell me," the doctor added, bring-

ing his tale to an end, "did you ever hear a more miserable history, or was ever man haunted in a more ghastly manner than this man?"

I was about to reply, when we heard a sound of footsteps outside, and before I could speak old Masey entered the room, in haste and disorder.

"I was just telling this gentleman," the doctor said: not at the moment observing old Masey's changed manner: "how you deserted me to go over to your present master."

"Ah! sir," the man answered, in a troubled voice, "I'm afraid he won't be my master long."

The doctor was on his legs in a moment. "What! Is he worse?"

"I think, sir, he is dying," said the old man.

"Come with me, sir; you may be of use if you can keep quiet." The doctor caught up his hat as he addressed me in those words, and in a few minutes we had reached The Compensation House. A few seconds more and we were standing in a darkened room on the first floor, and I saw lying on a bed before me—pale, emaciated, and, as it seemed, dying—the man whose story I had just heard.

He was lying with closed eyes when we came into the room, and I had leisure to examine his features. What a tale of misery they told! They were regular and symmetrical in their arrangement, and not without beauty—the beauty of exceeding refinement and delicacy. Force there was none, and perhaps it was to the want of this that the faults—perhaps the crime—which had made the man's life so miserable were to be attributed. Perhaps the crime? Yes, it was not likely that an affliction, lifelong and terrible, such as this he had endured, would come upon him unless some misdeed had provoked the punishment. What misdeed we were soon to know.

It sometimes—I think generally—happens that the presence of any one who stands and watches beside a sleeping man will wake him, unless his slumbers are unusually heavy. It was so now. While we looked at him, the sleeper awoke very suddenly, and fixed his eyes upon us. He put out his hand and took the doctor's in its feeble grasp. "Who is that?" he asked next, pointing towards me.

"Do you wish him to go?" The gentleman knows something of your sufferings, and is powerfully interested in your case; but he will leave us, if you wish it," the doctor said.

"No. Let him stay."

Seating myself out of sight, but where I could both see and hear what passed, waited for what should follow. Dr. Garden and John Masey stood beside the bed. There was a moment's pause.

"I want a looking-glass," said Strange, without a word of preface.

We all started to hear him say those words.

"I am dying," said Strange; "will you not grant me my request?"

Doctor Garden whispered to old Masey; and the latter left the room. He was not absent long, having gone no further than the

next house. He held an oval-framed mirror in his hand when he returned. A shudder passed through the body of the sick man as he saw it.

"Put it down," he said, faintly—"anywhere—for the present."

No one of us spoke. I do not think, in that moment of suspense, that we *could*, any of us, have spoken if we had tried.

The sick man tried to raise himself a little. "Prop me up," he said. "I speak with difficulty—I have something to say."

They put pillows behind him, so as to raise his head and body.

"I have presently a use for it," he said, indicating the mirror. "I want to see——" He stopped, and seemed to change his mind. He was sparing of his words. "I want to tell you—all about it." Again he was silent. Then he seemed to make a great effort and spoke once more, beginning very abruptly.

"I loved my wife fondly. I loved her—her name was Lucy. She was English; but, after we were married, we lived long abroad—in Italy. She liked the country, and I liked what she liked. She liked to draw, too, and I got her a master. He was an Italian. I will not give his name. We always called him 'the Master.' A treacherous insidious man this was, and, under cover of his profession, took advantage of his opportunities, and taught my wife to love him—to love him.

"I am short of breath. I need not enter into details as to how I found them out; but I *did* find them out. We were away on a sketching expedition when I made my discovery. My rage maddened me, and there was one at hand who fomented my madness. My wife had a maid, who, it seemed, had also loved this man—the Master—and had been ill treated and deserted by him. She told me all. She had played the part of go-between—had carried letters. When she told me these things, it was night, in a solitary Italian town, among the mountains. 'He is in his room now,' she said, 'writing to her.'

"A frenzy took possession of me as I listened to those words. I am naturally vindictive—remember that—and now my longing for revenge was like a thirst. Travelling in those lonely regions, I was armed, and when the woman said, 'He is writing to your wife,' I laid hold of my pistols, as by an instinct. It has been some comfort to me since, that I took them both. Perhaps, at that moment, I may have meant fairly by him—meant that we should fight. I don't know what I meant, quite. The woman's words, 'He is in his own room now, writing to her,' rung in my ears.

The sick man stopped to take breath. It seemed an hour, though it was probably not more than two minutes, before he spoke again.

"I managed to get into his room unobserved. Indeed, he was altogether absorbed in what he was doing. He was sitting at the only table

in the room, writing at a travelling-desk, by the light of a single candle. It was a rude dressing-table, and—and before him—exactly before him—there was—there was a looking-glass.

"I stole up behind him as he sat and wrote by the light of the candle. I looked over his shoulder at the letter, and I read, 'Dearest Lucy, my love, my darling.' As I read the words, I pulled the trigger of the pistol I held in my right hand, and killed him—killed him—but, before he died, he looked up once—not at me, but at my image before him in the glass, and his face—such a face—has been there—ever since, and mine—my face—is gone!"

He fell back exhausted, and we all pressed forward thinking that he must be dead, he lay so still.

But he had not yet passed away. He revived under the influence of stimulants. He tried to speak, and muttered indistinctly from time to time words of which we could sometimes make no sense. We understood, however, that he had been tried by an Italian tribunal, and had been found guilty; but with such extenuating circumstances that his sentence was commuted to imprisonment, during, we thought we made out, two years. But we could not understand what he said about his wife, though we gathered that she was still alive, from something he whispered to the doctor of there being provision made for her in his will.

He lay in a doze for something more than an hour after he had told his tale, and then he woke up quite suddenly, as he had done when we had first entered the room. He looked round uneasily in all directions, until his eye fell on the looking-glass.

"I want it," he said, hastily; but I noticed that he did not shudder now, as it was brought near. When old Masey approached, holding it in his hand, and crying like a child, Dr. Garden came forward and stood between him and his master, taking the hand of poor Strange in his.

"Is this wise?" he asked. "Is it good, do you, think, to revive this misery of your life now, when it is so near its close? The chastisement of your crime," he added, solemnly, "has been a terrible one. Let us hope in God's mercy that your punishment is over."

The dying man raised himself with a last great effort, and looked up at the doctor with such an expression on his face as none of us had seen on any face, before.

"I do hope so," he said, faintly, "but you must let me have my way in this—for if, now, when I look, I see aright—once more—I shall then hope yet more strongly—for I shall take it as a sign."

The doctor stood aside without another word, when he heard the dying man speak thus, and the old servant drew near, and, stooping over softly, held the looking-glass before his master. Presently afterwards, we, who stood around looking breathlessly at him, saw such a rapture

upon his face, as left no doubt upon our minds that the face which had haunted him so long, had, in his last hour, disappeared.

NO. 4 BRANCH LINE. THE TRAVELLING POST-OFFICE.

Many years ago, and before this Line was so much as projected, I was engaged as a clerk in a Travelling Post-office running along the Line of railway from London to a town in the Midland Counties, which we will call Fazeley. My duties were to accompany the mail-train which left Fazeley at 8.15 P.M., and arrived in London about midnight, and to return by the day mail leaving London at 10.30 the following morning, after which I had an unbroken night at Fazeley, while another clerk discharged the same round of work; and in this way each alternate evening I was on duty in the railway post-office van. At first I suffered a little from a hurry and tremor of nerve in pursuing my occupation while the train was crashing along under bridges and through tunnels at a speed which was then thought marvellous and perilous; but it was not long before my hands and eyes became accustomed to the motion of the carriage, and I could go through my business with the same despatch and ease as in the post-office of the country town where I had learned it, and from which I had been promoted by the influence of the surveyor of the district, Mr. Huntingdon. In fact, the work soon fell into a monotonous routine, which, night after night, was pursued in an unbroken course by myself and the junior clerk, who was my only assistant: the railway post-office work not having then attained the importance and magnitude it now possesses.

Our route lay through an agricultural district containing many small towns, which made up two or three bags only; one for London; another perhaps for the county town; a third for the railway post-office, to be opened by us, and the enclosures to be distributed according to their various addresses. The clerks in many of these small offices were women, as is very generally the case still, being the daughters and female relatives of the nominal postmaster, who transact most of the business of the office, and whose names are most frequently signed upon the bills accompanying the bags. I was a young man, and somewhat more curious in feminine handwriting than I am now. There was one family in particular, whom I had never seen, but with whose signatures I was perfectly familiar—clear, delicate, and educated, very unlike the miserable scrawl upon other letter-bills. One New Year's-eve, in a moment of sentiment, I tied a slip of paper among a bundle of letters for their office, upon which I had written, "A happy New Year to you all." The next evening brought me a return of my good wishes, signed, as I guessed, by three sisters of the name of Clifton. From that day, every now and then, a sentence or two as brief as the one above passed between us, and the feeling of acquaintance and friendship grew upon me, though

I had never yet had an opportunity of seeing my fair unknown friends.

It was towards the close of the following October that it came under my notice that the then Premier of the ministry was paying an autumn visit to a nobleman, whose country seat was situated near a small village on our line of rail. The Premier's despatch-box, containing, of course, all the despatches which it was necessary to send down to him, passed between him and the Secretary of State, and was, as usual, entrusted to the care of the post-office. The Continent was just then in a more than ordinarily critical state; we were thought to be upon the verge of an European war; and there were murmurs floating about, at the dispersion of the ministry up and down the country. These circumstances made the charge of the despatch-box the more interesting to me. It was very similar in size and shape to the old-fashioned workboxes used by ladies before boxes of polished and ornamental wood came into vogue, and, like them, it was covered with red morocco leather, and it fastened with a lock and key. The first time it came into my hands I took such special notice of it as might be expected. Upon one corner of the lid I detected a peculiar device scratched slightly upon it, most probably with the sharp point of a steel pen, in such a moment of preoccupation of mind as causes most of us to draw odd lines and caricatured faces upon any piece of paper which may lie under our hand. It was the old revolutionary device of a heart with a dagger piercing it; and I wondered whether it could be the Premier, or one of his secretaries, who had traced it upon the morocco.

This box had been travelling up and down for about ten days, and, as the village did not make up a bag for London, there being very few letters excepting those from the great house, the letter-bag from the house, and the despatch-box, were handed direct into our travelling post-office. But in compliment to the presence of the Premier in the neighbourhood, the train, instead of slackening speed only, stopped altogether, in order that the Premier's trusty and confidential messenger might deliver the important box into my own hands, that its perfect safety might be ensured. I had an undefined suspicion that some person was also employed to accompany the train up to London, for three or four times I had met with a foreign-looking gentleman at Euston-square, standing at the door of the carriage nearest the post-office van, and eyeing the heavy bags as they were transferred from my care to the custody of the officials from the General Post-office. But though I felt amused and somewhat nettled at this needless precaution, I took no further notice of the man, except to observe that he had the swarthy aspect of a foreigner, and that he kept his face well away from the light of the lamps. Except for these things, and after the first time or two, the Premier's despatch-box interested me no more than any other part of my charge. My work had been doubly mono-

tonous for some time past, and I began to think it time to get up some little entertainment with my unknown friends, the Cliftons. I was just thinking of it as the train stopped at the station about a mile from the town where they lived, and their postman, a gruff matter-of-fact fellow—you could see it in every line of his face—put in the letter-bags, and with them a letter addressed to me. It was in an official envelope, "On Her Majesty's Service," and the seal was an official seal. On the folded paper inside it (folded officially also) I read the following order: "Mr. Wilcox is requested to permit the bearer, the daughter of the postmaster at Eaton, to see the working of the railway post-office during the up-journey." The writing I knew well as being that of one of the surveyor's clerks, and the signature was Mr. Huntingdon's. The bearer of the order presented herself at the door, the snorting of the engine gave notice of the instant departure of the train, I held out my hand, the young lady sprang lightly and deftly into the van, and we were off again on our midnight journey.

She was a small slight creature, one of those slender little girls one never thinks of as being a woman, dressed neatly and plainly in a dark dress, with a veil hanging a little over her face and tied under her chin: the most noticeable thing about her appearance being a great mass of light hair, almost yellow, which had got loose in some way, and fell down her neck in thick wavy tresses. She had a free pleasant way about her, not in the least bold or forward, which in a minute or two made her presence seem the most natural thing in the world. As she stood beside me before the row of boxes into which I was sorting my letters, she asked questions and I answered as if it were quite an every-day occurrence for us to be travelling up together in the night mail to Euston-square station. I blamed myself for an idiot that I had not sooner made an opportunity for visiting my unknown friends at Eaton.

"Then," I said, putting down the letter-bill from their own office before her, "may I ask which of the signatures I know so well, is yours? Is it A. Clifton, or M. Clifton, or S. Clifton? She hesitated a little, and blushed, and lifted up her frank childlike eyes to mine.

"I am A. Clifton," she answered.

"And your name?" I said.

"Anne," then, as if anxious to give some explanation to me of her present position, she added, "I was going up to London on a visit, and I thought it would be so nice to travel in the post-office to see how the work was done, and Mr. Huntingdon came to survey our office, and he said he would send me an order."

I felt somewhat surprised, for a stricter martinet than Mr. Huntingdon did not breathe; but I glanced down at the small innocent face at my side, and cordially approved of his departure from ordinary rules.

"Did you know you would travel with me?" I asked, in a lower voice; for Tom Morville, my junior, was at my other elbow.

"I knew I should travel with Mr. Wilcox,"

she answered, with a smile that made all my nerves tingle.

"You have not written me a word for ages," said I, reproachfully.

"You had better not talk, or you'll be making mistakes," she replied, in an arch tone. It was quite true; for, a sudden confusion coming over me, I was sorting the letters at random.

We were just then approaching the small station where the letter-bag from the great house was taken up. The engine was slackening speed. Miss Clifton manifested some natural and becoming diffidence.

"It would look so odd," she said, "to any one on the platform, to see a girl in the post-office van! And they couldn't know I was a postmaster's daughter, and had an order from Mr. Huntingdon. Is there no dark corner to shelter me?"

I must explain to you in a word or two the construction of the van, which was much less efficiently fitted up than the travelling post-offices of the present day. It was a reversible van, with a door at each right-hand corner. At each door the letter-boxes were so arranged as to form a kind of screen about two feet in width, which prevented people from seeing all over the carriage at once. Thus the door at the far end of the van, the one not in use at the time, was thrown into deep shadow, and the screen before it turned it into a small niche, where a slight little person like Miss Clifton was very well concealed from curious eyes. Before the train came within the light from the lamps on the platform, she ensconced herself in this shelter. No one but I could see her laughing face, as she stood there leaning cautiously forward with her finger pressed upon her rosy lips, peeping at the messenger who delivered into my own hands the Premier's despatch-box, while Tom Morville received the letter-bag of the great house.

"See," I said, when we were again in motion, and she had emerged from her concealment, "this is the Premier's despatch-box, going back to the Secretary of State. There are some state secrets for you, and ladies are fond of secrets."

"O! I know nothing about politics," she answered, indifferently, "and we have had that box through our office a time or two."

"Did you ever notice this mark upon it," I asked—"a heart with a dagger through it?" and bending down my face to hers, I added a certain spooney remark, which I do not care to repeat. Miss Clifton tossed her little head, and pouted her lips; but she took the box out of my hands, and carried it to the lamp nearest the further end of the van, after which she put it down upon the counter close beside the screen, and I thought no more about it. The midnight ride was entertaining in the extreme, for the girl was full of young life and sauciness and merry humour. I can safely aver that I have never been to an evening's so-called entertainment which, to me, was half so enjoyable. It added also to the zest and keen edge of the enjoyment to see her hasten to hide

herself whenever I told her we were going to stop to take up the mails.

We had passed Watford, the last station at which we stopped, before I became alive to the recollection that our work was terribly behindhand. Miss Clifton also became grave, and sat at the end of the counter very quiet and subdued, as if her frolic were over, and it was possible she might find something to repent of in it. I had told her we should stop no more until we reached Euston-square station, but to my surprise I felt our speed decreasing, and our train coming to a stand-still. I looked out and called to the guard in the van behind, who told me he supposed there was something on the line before us, and that we should go on in a minute or two. I turned my head, and gave this information to my fellow-clerk and Miss Clifton.

"Do you know where we are?" she asked, in a frightened tone.

"At Camden-town," I replied. She sprang hastily from her seat, and came towards me.

"I am close to my friend's house here," she said, "so it is a lucky thing for me. It is not five minutes' walk from the station. I will say good-bye to you now, Mr. Wilcox, and I thank you a thousand times for your kindness."

She seemed flurried, and she held out both her little hands to me in an appealing kind of way, as if she were afraid of my detaining her against her will. I took them both into mine, pressing them with rather more ardour than was quite necessary.

"I do not like you to go alone at this hour," I said, "but there is no help for it. It has been a delightful time to me. Will you allow me to call upon you to-morrow morning early, for I leave London at 10.30; or on Wednesday, when I shall be in town again?"

"O," she answered, hanging her head, "I don't know. I'll write and tell mamma how kind you have been, and, and—but I must go, Mr. Wilcox."

"I don't like your going alone," I repeated.

"O! I know the way perfectly," she said, in the same flurried manner, "perfectly, thank you. And it is close at hand. Good-bye!"

She jumped lightly out of the carriage, and the train started on again at the same instant. We were busy enough, as you may suppose. In five minutes more we should be in Euston-square, and there was nearly fifteen minutes' work still to be done. Spite of the enjoyment he had afforded me, I mentally anathematised Mr. Huntingdon and his departure from ordinary rules, and, thrusting Miss Clifton forcibly out of my thoughts, I set to work with a will, gathered up the registered letters for London, tied them into a bundle with the paper bill, and then turned to the corner of the counter for the despatch-box.

You have guessed already my cursed misfortune. The Premier's despatch-box was not there. For the first minute or so I was in no-wise alarmed, and merely looked round, upon the floor, under the bags, into the boxes, into any place into which it could have fallen or been deposited. We reached Euston-square

while I was still searching, and losing more and more of my composure every instant. Tom Morville joined me in my quest, and felt every bag which had been made up and sealed. The box was no small article which could go into little compass; it was certainly twelve inches long, and more than that in girth. But it turned up nowhere. I never felt nearer fainting than at that moment.

"Could Miss Clifton have carried it off?" suggested Tom Morville.

"No," I said, indignantly but thoughtfully, "she couldn't have carried off such a bulky thing as that, without our seeing it. It would not go into one of our pockets, Tom, and she wore a tight-fitting jacket that would not conceal anything."

"No, she can't have it," assented Tom; "then it must be somewhere about." We searched again and again, turning over everything in the van, but without success. The Premier's despatch-box was gone; and all we could do at first was to stand and stare at one another. Our trance of blank dismay was of short duration, for the van was assailed by the postmen from St. Martin's-le-Grand, who were waiting for our charge. In a stupor of bewilderment we completed our work, and delivered up the mails; then, once more we confronted one another with pale faces, frightened out of our seven senses. All the scrapes we had ever been in (and we had had our usual share of errors and blunders) faded into utter insignificance compared with this. My eye fell upon Mr. Huntingdon's order lying among some scraps of waste paper on the floor, and I picked it up, and put it carefully, with its official envelope, into my pocket.

"We can't stay here," said Tom. The porters were looking in inquisitively; we were seldom so long in quitting our empty van.

"No," I replied, a sudden gleam of sense darting across the blank bewilderment of my brain; "no, we must go to head-quarters at once, and make a clean breast of it. This is no private business, Tom."

We made one more ineffectual search, and then we hailed a cab and drove as hard as we could to the General Post-office. The secretary of the Post-office was not there, of course, but we obtained the address of his residence in one of the suburbs, four or five miles from the City, and we told no one of our misfortune, my idea being that the fewer who were made acquainted with the loss the better. My judgment was in the right there.

We had to knock up the household of the secretary—a formidable personage with whom I had never been brought into contact before—and in a short time we were holding a strictly private and confidential interview with him, by the glimmer of a solitary candle, just serving to light up his severe face, which changed its expression several times as I narrated the calamity. It was too stupendous for rebuke, and I fancied his eyes softened with something like commiseration as he gazed upon us. After a short

interval of deliberation, he announced his intention of accompanying us to the residence of the Secretary of State; and in a few minutes we were driving back again to the opposite extremity of London. It was not far off the hour for the morning delivery of letters when we reached our destination; but the atmosphere was yellow with fog, and we could see nothing as we passed along in almost utter silence, for neither of us ventured to speak, and the secretary only made a brief remark now and then. We drove up to some dwelling enveloped in fog, and we were left in the cab for nearly half an hour, while our secretary went in. At the end of that time we were summoned to an apartment where there was seated at a large desk a small spare man, with a great head, and eyes deeply sunk under the brows. There was no form of introduction, of course, and we could only guess who he might be; but we were requested to repeat our statement, and a few shrewd questions were put to us by the stranger. We were eager to put him in possession of everything we knew, but that was little beyond the fact that the despatch-box was lost.

"That young person must have taken it," he said.

"She could not, sir," I answered, positively, but deferentially. "She wore the tightest-fitting pelisse I ever saw, and she gave me both her hands when she said good-bye. She could not possibly have it concealed about her. It would not go into my pocket."

"How did she come to travel up with you in the van, sir?" he asked, severely.

I gave him for answer the order signed by Mr. Huntingdon. He and our secretary scanned it closely.

"It is Huntingdon's signature without doubt," said the latter; "I could swear to it anywhere. This is an extraordinary circumstance!"

It was an extraordinary circumstance. The two retired into an adjoining room, where they stayed for another half-hour, and when they returned to us their faces still bore an aspect of grave perplexity.

"Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Morville," said our secretary, "it is expedient that this affair should be kept inviolably secret. You must even be careful not to hint that you hold any secret. You did well not to announce your loss at the Post-office, and I shall cause it to be understood that you had instructions to take the despatch-box direct to its destination. Your business now is to find the young woman, and return with her not later than six o'clock this afternoon to my office at the General Post-office. What other steps we think it requisite to take, you need know nothing about; the less you know, the better for yourselves."

Another gleam of commiseration in his official eye made our hearts sink within us. We departed promptly, and, with that instinct of wisdom which at times dictates infallibly what course we should pursue, we decided our line of action. Tom Morville was to go down to

Camden-town, and inquire at every house for Miss Clifton, while I—there would be just time for it—was to run down to Eaton by train and obtain her exact address from her parents. We agreed to meet at the General Post-office at half-past five, if I could possibly reach it by that time; but in any case Tom was to report himself to the secretary, and account for my absence.

When I arrived at the station at Eaton, I found that I had only forty-five minutes before the up train went by. The town was nearly a mile away, but I made all the haste I could to reach it. I was not surprised to find the post-office in connexion with a bookseller's shop, and I saw a pleasant elderly lady seated behind the counter, while a tall dark-haired girl was sitting at some work a little out of sight. I introduced myself at once.

"I am Frank Wilcox, of the railway post-office, and I have just run down to Eaton to obtain some information from you."

"Certainly. We know you well by name," was the reply, given in a cordial manner, which was particularly pleasant to me.

"Will you be so good as give me the address of Miss Anne Clifton in Camden-town?" I said.

"Miss Anne Clifton?" ejaculated the lady.

"Yes. Your daughter, I presume. Who went up to London last night?"

"I have no daughter Anne," she said; "I am Anne Clifton, and my daughters are named Mary and Susan. This is my daughter Mary."

The tall dark-haired girl had left her seat, and now stood beside her mother. Certainly she was very unlike the small golden-haired coquette who had travelled up to London with me as Anne Clifton.

"Madam," I said, scarcely able to speak, "is your other daughter a slender little creature, exactly the reverse of this young lady?"

"No," she answered, laughing; "Susan is both taller and darker than Mary. Call Susan, my dear."

In a few seconds Miss Susan made her appearance, and I had the three before me—A. Clifton, S. Clifton, and M. Clifton. There was no other girl in the family; and when I described the young lady who had travelled under their name, they could not think of any one in the town—it was a small one—who answered my description, or who had gone on a visit to London. I had no time to spare, and I hurried back to the station, just catching the train as it left the platform. At the appointed hour I met Morville at the General Post-office, and threading the long passages of the secretary's offices, we at length found ourselves anxiously waiting in an ante-room, until we were called into his presence. Morville had discovered nothing, except that the porters and policemen at Camden-town station had seen a young lady pass out last night, attended by a swarthy man who looked like a foreigner, and carried a small black portmanteau.

I scarcely know how long we waited; it might have been years, for I was conscious of

an ever-increasing difficulty in commanding my thoughts, or fixing them upon the subject which had engrossed them all day. I had not tasted food for twenty-four hours, nor closed my eyes for thirty-six, while, during the whole of the time, my nervous system had been on full strain.

Presently, the summons came, and I was ushered, first, into the inner apartment. There sat five gentlemen round a table, which was strewn with a number of documents. There were the Secretary of State, whom we had seen in the morning, our secretary, and Mr. Huntingdon; the fourth was a fine-looking man, whom I afterwards knew to be the Premier; the fifth I recognised as our great chief, the Postmaster-General. It was an august assemblage to me, and I bowed low; but my head was dizzy, and my throat parched.

"Mr. Wilcox," said our secretary, "you will tell these gentlemen again, the circumstances of the loss you reported to me this morning."

I laid my hand upon the back of a chair to steady myself, and went through the narration for the third time, passing over sundry remarks made by myself to the young lady. That done, I added the account of my expedition to Eaton, and the certainty at which I had arrived that my fellow-traveller was not the person she represented herself to be. After which, I inquired with indescribable anxiety if Mr. Huntingdon's order were a forgery?

"I cannot tell, Mr. Wilcox," said that gentleman, taking the order into his hands, and regarding it with an air of extreme perplexity. "I could have sworn it was mine, had it been attached to any other document. I think Forbes's handwriting is not so well imitated. But it is the very ink I use, and mine is a peculiar signature."

It was a very peculiar and old-fashioned signature, with a flourish underneath it not unlike a whip-handle, with the lash caught round it in the middle; but that did not make it the more difficult to forge, as I humbly suggested. Mr. Huntingdon wrote his name upon a paper, and two or three of the gentlemen tried to imitate the flourish, but vainly. They gave it up with a smile upon their grave faces.

"You have been careful not to let a hint of this matter drop from you, Mr. Wilcox?" said the Postmaster-General.

"Not a syllable, my lord," I answered.

"It is imperatively necessary that the secret should be kept. You would be removed from the temptation of telling it, if you had an appointment in some office abroad. The packet-agency at Alexandria is vacant, and I will have you appointed to it at once."

It would be a good advance from my present situation, and would doubtless prove a stepping-stone to other and better appointments; but I had a mother living at Fazeley, bedridden and paralytic, who had no pleasure in existence except having me to dwell under the same roof with her. My head was growing more and more dizzy, and a strange vagueness was creeping over me.

"Gentlemen," I muttered, "I have a bedridden mother whom I cannot leave. I was not

to blame, gentlemen." I fancied there was a stir and movement at the table, but my eyes were dim, and in another second I had lost consciousness.

When I came to myself, in two or three minutes, I found that Mr. Huntingdon was kneeling on the floor beside me, supporting my head, while our secretary held a glass of wine to my lips. I rallied as quickly as possible, and staggered to my feet; but the two gentlemen placed me in the chair against which I had been leaning, and insisted upon my finishing the wine before I tried to speak.

"I have not tasted food all day," I said, faintly.

"Then, my good fellow, you shall go home immediately," said the Postmaster-General; "but be on your guard! Not a word of this must escape you. Are you a married man?"

"No, my lord," I answered.

"So much the better," he added, smiling. "You can keep a secret from your mother, I dare say. We rely upon your honour."

The secretary then rang a bell, and I was committed to the charge of the messenger who answered it; and in a few minutes I was being conveyed in a cab to my London lodgings. A week afterwards, Tom Morville was sent out to a post-office in Canada, where he settled down, married, and is still living, perfectly satisfied with his position, as he occasionally informs me by letter. For myself, I remained as I desired, in my old post as travelling-clerk until the death of my mother, which occurred some ten or twelve months afterwards. I was then promoted to an appointment as a clerk in charge, upon the first vacancy.

The business of the clerks in charge is to take possession of any post-office in the kingdom, upon the death or resignation of the postmaster, or when circumstances of suspicion cause his suspension from office. My new duties carried me three or four times into Mr. Huntingdon's district. Though that gentleman and I never exchanged a word with regard to the mysterious loss in which we had both had an innocent share, he distinguished me with peculiar favour, and more than once invited me to visit him at his own house. He lived alone, having but one daughter, who had married, somewhat against his will, one of his clerks: the Mr. Forbes whose handwriting had been so successfully imitated in the official order presented to me by the self-styled Miss Anne Clifton. (By the way, I may here mention, though it has nothing to do with my story, that my acquaintance with the Cliftons had ripened into an intimacy, which resulted in my engagement and marriage to Mary.)

It would be beside my purpose to specify the precise number of years which elapsed before I was once again summoned to the secretary's private apartment, where I found him closeted with Mr. Huntingdon. Mr. Huntingdon shook hands with unofficial cordiality; and then the secretary proceeded to state the business on hand.

"Mr. Wilcox, you remember our offer to place you in office in Alexandria?" he said.

"Certainly, sir," I answered.

"It has been a troublesome office," he continued, almost pettishly. "We sent out Mr. Forbes only six months ago, on account of his health, which required a warmer climate, and now his medical man reports that his life is not worth three weeks' purchase."

Upon Mr. Huntingdon's face there rested an expression of profound anxiety; and as the secretary paused he addressed himself to me.

"Mr. Wilcox," he said, "I have been soliciting, as a personal favour, that you should be sent out to take charge of the packet agency, in order that my daughter may have some one at hand to befriend her, and manage her business affairs for her. You are not personally acquainted with her, but I know I can trust her with you."

"You may, Mr. Huntingdon," I said, warmly. "I will do anything I can to aid Mrs. Forbes. When do you wish me to start?"

"How soon can you be ready?" was the rejoinder.

"To-morrow morning."

I was not married then, and I anticipated no delay in setting off. Nor was there any. I travelled with the overland mail through France to Marseilles, embarked in a vessel for Alexandria, and in a few days from the time I first heard of my destination set foot in the office there. All the postal arrangements had fallen into considerable irregularity and confusion; for, as I was informed immediately on my arrival, Mr. Forbes had been in a dying condition for the last week, and of course the absence of a master had borne the usual results. I took formal possession of the office, and then, conducted by one of the clerks, I proceeded to the dwelling of the unfortunate postmaster and his no less unfortunate wife. It would be out of place in this narrative to indulge in any traveller's tales about the strange place where I was so unexpectedly located. Suffice it to say, that the darkened sultry room into which I was shown, on inquiring for Mrs. Forbes, was bare of furniture, and destitute of all those little tokens of refinement and taste which make our English parlours so pleasant to the eye. There was, however, a piano in one of the dark corners of the room, open, and with a sheet of music on it. While I waited for Mrs. Forbes's appearance, I strolled idly up to the piano to see what music it might be. The next moment my eye fell upon an antique red morocco workbox standing on the top of the piano—a workbox evidently, for the lid was not closely shut, and a few threads of silk and cotton were hanging out of it. In a kind of dream—for it was difficult to believe that the occurrence was a fact—I carried the box to the darkened window, and there, plain in my sight, was the device scratched upon the leather: the revolutionary symbol of a heart with a dagger through it. I had found the Premier's despatch-box in the parlour of the packet-agent of Alexandria!

I stood for some minutes with that dreamlike feeling upon me, gazing at the box in the dim obscure light. It could *not* be real! My

fancy must be playing a trick upon me! But the sound of a light step—for, light as it was, I heard it distinctly as it approached the room—broke my trance, and I hastened to replace the box on the piano, and to stoop down as if examining the music before the door opened. I had not sent in my name to Mrs. Forbes, for I did not suppose that she was acquainted with it, nor could she see me distinctly, as I stood in the gloom. But I could see her. She had the slight slender figure, the childlike face, and the fair hair of Miss Anne Clifton. She came quickly across the room, holding out both her hands in a childish appealing manner.

"O!" she wailed, in a tone that went straight to my heart, "he is dead! He has just died!"

It was no time then to speak about the red morocco workbox. This little childish creature, who did not look a day older than when I had last seen her in my travelling post-office, was a widow in a strange land, far away from any friend save myself. I had brought her a letter from her father. The first duties that devolved upon me were those of her husband's internment, which had to take place immediately. Three or four weeks elapsed before I could, with any humanity, enter upon the investigation of her mysterious complicity in the daring theft practised on the government and the post-office.

I did not see the despatch-box again. In the midst of her new and vehement grief, Mrs. Forbes had the precaution to remove it before I was ushered again into the room where I had discovered it. I was at some trouble to hit upon any plan by which to gain a second sight of it; but I was resolved that Mrs. Forbes should not leave Alexandria without giving me a full explanation. We were waiting for remittances and instructions from England, and in the mean time the violence of her grief abated, and she recovered a good share of her old buoyancy and loveliness, which had so delighted me on my first acquaintance with her. As her demands upon my sympathy weakened, my curiosity grew stronger, and at last mastered me. I carried with me a netted purse which required mending, and I asked her to catch up the broken meshes while I waited for it.

"I will tell your maid to bring your workbox," I said, going to the door and calling the servant. "Your mistress has a red morocco workbox," I said to her, as she answered my summons.

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"Where is it?"

"In her bedroom," she said.

"Mrs. Forbes wishes it brought here." I turned back into the room. Mrs. Forbes had gone deadly pale, but her eyes looked sullen, and her teeth were clenched under her lips with an expression of stubbornness. The maid brought the workbox. I walked, with it in my hands, up to the sofa where she was seated.

"You remember this mark?" I asked; "I think neither of us can ever forget it."

She did not answer by word, but there was a very intelligent gleam in her blue eyes.

"Now," I continued, softly, "I promised your father to befriend you, and I am not a man to forget a promise. But you must tell me the whole simple truth."

I was compelled to reason with her, and to urge her for some time. I confess I went so far as to remind her that there was an English consul at Alexandria, to whom I could resort. At last she opened her stubborn lips, and the whole story came out, mingled with sobs and showers of tears.

She had been in love with Alfred, she said, and they were too poor to marry, and papa would not hear of such a thing. She was always in want of money, she was kept so short; and they promised to give her such a great sum—a vast sum—five hundred pounds.

"But who bribed you?" I inquired.

A foreign gentleman whom she had met in London, called Monsieur Bonnard. It was a French name, but she was not sure that he was a Frenchman. He talked to her about her father being a surveyor in the post-office, and asked her a great number of questions. A few weeks after, she met him in their own town by accident, she and Mr. Forbes; and Alfred had a long private talk with him, and they came to her, and told her she could help them very much. They asked her if she could be brave enough to carry off a little red box out of the travelling post-office, containing nothing but papers. After a while she consented. When she had confessed so much under compulsion, Mrs. Forbes seemed to take a pleasure in the narrative, and went on fluently.

"We required papa's signature to the order, and we did not know how to get it. Luckily he had a fit of the gout, and was very peevish; and I had to read over a lot of official papers to him, and then he signed them. One of the papers I read twice, and slipped the order into its place after the second reading. I thought I should have died with fright; but just then he was in great pain, and glad to get his work over. I made an excuse that I was going to visit my aunt at Beckby, but instead of going there direct, we contrived to be at the station at Eaton a minute or two before the mail train came up. I kept outside the station door till we heard the whistle, and just then the postman came running down the road, and I followed him straight through the booking-office, and asked him to give you the order, which I put into his hand. He scarcely saw me. I just caught a glimpse of Monsieur Bonnard's face through the window of the compartment next the van, when Alfred had gone. They had promised me that the train should stop at Camden-town, if I could only keep your attention engaged until then. You know how I succeeded."

"But how did you dispose of the box?" I asked. "You could not have concealed it about you; that I am sure of."

"Ah!" she said, "nothing was easier. Monsieur Bonnard had described the van to me, and you remember I put the box down at the end of

the counter, close to the corner where I hid myself at every station. There was a door with a window in it, and I asked if I might have the window open, as the van was too warm for me. I believe Monsieur Bonnard could have taken it from me by only leaning through his window, but he preferred stepping out, and taking it from my hand, just as the train was leaving Watford—on the far side of the carriages, you understand. It was the last station, and the train came to a stand at Camden-town. After all, the box was not out of your sight more than twenty minutes before you missed it. Monsieur Bonnard and I hurried out of the station, and Alfred followed us. The box was forced open—the lock has never been mended, for it was a peculiar one—and Monsieur Bonnard took possession of the papers. He left the box with me, after putting inside it a roll of notes. Alfred and I were married next morning, and I went back to my aunt's; but we did not tell papa of our marriage for three or four months. That is the story of my red morocco workbox."

She smiled with the provoking mirthfulness of a mischievous child. There was one point still, on which my curiosity was unsatisfied.

"Did you know what the despatches were about?" I asked.

"O no!" she answered; "I never understood politics in the least. I knew nothing about them. Monsieur did not say a word; he did not even look at the papers while we were by. I would never, never, have taken a registered letter, or anything with money in it, you know. But all those papers could be written again quite easily. You must not think me a thief, Mr. Wilcox; there was nothing worth money among the papers."

"They were worth five hundred pounds to you," I said. "Did you ever see Bonnard again?"

"Never again," she replied. "He said he was going to return to his native country. I don't think Bonnard was his real name."

Most likely not, I thought; but I said no more to Mrs. Forbes. Once again I was involved in a great perplexity about this affair. It was clearly my duty to report the discovery at head-quarters, but I shrank from doing so. One of the chief culprits was already gone to another judgment than that of man; several years had obliterated all traces of Monsieur Bonnard; and the only victim of justice would be this poor little dupe of the two greater criminals. At last I came to the conclusion to send the whole of the particulars to Mr. Huntingdon himself; and I wrote them to him, without remark or comment.

The answer that came to Mrs. Forbes and me in Alexandria was the announcement of Mr. Huntingdon's sudden death of some disease of the heart, on the day which I calculated would put him in possession of my communication. Mrs. Forbes was again overwhelmed with apparently heartrending sorrow and remorse. The income left to her was something less than one hundred pounds a year. The secretary of the

post-office, who had been a personal friend of the deceased gentleman, was his sole executor; and I received a letter from him, containing one for Mrs. Forbes, which recommended her, in terms not to be misunderstood, to fix upon some residence abroad, and not to return to England. She fancied she would like the seclusion and quiet of a convent; and I made arrangements for her to enter one in Malta, where she would still be under British protection. I left Alexandria myself on the arrival of another packet-agent; and on my return to London I had a private interview with the secretary. I found that there was no need to inform him of the circumstances I have related to you, as he had taken possession of all Mr. Huntingdon's papers. In consideration of his ancient friendship, and of the escape of those who most merited punishment, he had come to the conclusion that it was quite as well to let bygones be bygones.

At the conclusion of the interview I delivered a message which Mrs. Forbes had emphatically entrusted to me.

"Mrs. Forbes wished me to impress upon your mind," I said, "that neither she nor Mr. Forbes would have been guilty of this misdemeanour if they had not been very much in love with one another, and very much in want of money."

"Ah!" replied the secretary, with a smile, "if Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the fate of the world would have been different!"

NO. 5 BRANCH LINE. THE ENGINEER.

His name, sir, was Matthew Price; mine is Benjamin Hardy. We were born within a few days of each other; bred up in the same village; taught at the same school. I cannot remember the time when we were not close friends. Even as boys, we never knew what it was to quarrel. We had not a thought, we had not a possession, that was not in common. We would have stood by each other, fearlessly, to the death. It was such a friendship as one reads about sometimes in books: fast and firm as the great Tors upon our native moorlands, true as the sun in the heavens.

The name of our village was Chadleigh. Lifted high above the pasture flats which stretched away at our feet like a measureless green lake and melted into mist on the furthest horizon, it nestled, a tiny stone-built hamlet, in a sheltered hollow about midway between the plain and the plateau. Above us, rising ridge beyond ridge, slope beyond slope, spread the mountainous moor-country, bare and bleak for the most part, with here and there a patch of cultivated field or hardy plantation, and crowned highest of all with masses of huge grey crag, abrupt, isolated, hoary, and older than the deluge. These were the Tors—Druids' Tor, King's Tor, Castle Tor, and the like; sacred places, as I have heard, in the ancient time, where crownings, burnings, human sacrifices, and all kinds of bloody heathen rites were performed. Bones, too, had been found there,

and arrow-heads, and ornaments of gold and glass. I had a vague awe of the Tors in those boyish days, and would not have gone near them after dark for the heaviest bribe.

I have said that we were born in the same village. He was the son of a small farmer, named William Price, and the eldest of a family of seven; I was the only child of Ephraim Hardy, the Chadleigh blacksmith—a well-known man in those parts, whose memory is not forgotten to this day. Just so far as a farmer is supposed to be a bigger man than a blacksmith, Mat's father might be said to have a better standing than mine; but William Price with his small holding and his seven boys, was, in fact, as poor as many a day-labourer; whilst, the blacksmith, well-to-do, bustling, popular, and open-handed, was a person of some importance in the place. All this, however, had nothing to do with Mat and myself. It never occurred to either of us that his jacket was out at elbows, or that our mutual funds came altogether from my pocket. It was enough for us that we sat on the same school-bench, coned our tasks from the same primer, fought each other's battles, screened each other's faults, fished, nipped, played truant, robbed orchards and birds' nests together, and spent every half-hour, authorised or stolen, in each other's society. It was a happy time; but it could not go on for ever. My father, being prosperous, resolved to put me forward in the world. I must know more, and do better, than himself. The forge was not good enough, the little world of Chadleigh not wide enough, for me. Thus it happened that I was still swinging the satchel when Mat was whistling at the plough, and that at last, when my future course was shaped out, we were separated, as it then seemed to us, for life. For, blacksmith's son as I was, furnace and forge, in some form or other, pleased me best, and I chose to be a working engineer. So my father by-and-by apprenticed me to a Birmingham iron-master; and, having bidden farewell to Mat, and Chadleigh, and the grey old Tors in the shadow of which I had spent all the days of my life, I turned my face northward, and went over into "the Black country."

I am not going to dwell on this part of my story. How I worked out the term of my apprenticeship; how, when I had served my full time and become a skilled workman, I took Mat from the plough and brought him over to the Black Country, sharing with him lodging, wages, experience—all, in short, that I had to give; how he, naturally quick to learn and brimful of quiet energy, worked his way up a step at a time, and came by-and-by to be a "first hand" in his own department; how, during all these years of change, and trial, and effort, the old boyish affection never wavered or weakened, but went on, growing with our growth and strengthening with our strength—are facts which I need do no more than outline in this place.

About this time—it will be remembered that I speak of the days when Mat and I were on

the bright side of thirty—it happened that our firm contracted to supply six first-class locomotives to run on the new line, then in process of construction, between Turin and Genoa. It was the first Italian order we had taken. We had had dealings with France, Holland, Belgium, Germany; but never with Italy. The connexion, therefore, was new and valuable—all the more valuable because our Transalpine neighbours had but lately begun to lay down the iron roads, and would be safe to need more of our good English work as they went on. So the Birmingham firm set themselves to the contract with a will, lengthened our working hours, increased our wages, took on fresh hands, and determined, if energy and promptitude could do it, to place themselves at the head of the Italian labour-market, and stay there. They deserved and achieved success. The six locomotives were not only turned out to time, but were shipped, despatched, and delivered with a promptitude that fairly amazed our Piedmontese consignee. I was not a little proud, you may be sure, when I found myself appointed to superintend the transport of the engines. Being allowed a couple of assistants, I contrived that Mat should be one of them; and thus we enjoyed together the first great holiday of our lives.

It was a wonderful change for two Birmingham operatives fresh from the Black Country. The fairy city, with its crescent background of Alps; the port crowded with strange shipping; the marvellous blue sky and bluer sea; the painted houses on the quays; the quaint cathedral, faced with black and white marble; the street of jewellers, like an Arabian Nights' bazaar; the street of palaces, with its Moorish court-yards, its fountains and orange-trees; the women veiled like brides; the galley-slaves chained two and two; the processions of priests and friars; the everlasting clangour of bells; the babble of a strange tongue; the singular lightness and brightness of the climate—made, altogether, such a combination of wonders that we wandered about, the first day, in a kind of bewildered dream, like children at a fair. Before that week was ended, being tempted by the beauty of the place and the liberality of the pay, we had agreed to take service with the Turin and Genoa Railway Company, and to turn our backs upon Birmingham for ever.

Then began a new life—a life so active and healthy, so steeped in fresh air and sunshine, that we sometimes marvelled how we could have endured the gloom of the Black Country. We were constantly up and down the line: now at Genoa, now at Turin, taking trial trips with the locomotives, and placing our old experiences at the service of our new employers.

In the mean while we made Genoa our headquarters, and hired a couple of rooms over a small shop in a by-street sloping down to the quays. Such a busy little street—so steep and winding that no vehicles could pass through it, and so narrow that the sky looked like a mere strip of deep-blue ribbon overhead! Every house in it, however, was a shop, where the goods encroached on the footway, or were

piled about the door, or hung like tapestry from the balconies; and all day long, from dawn to dusk, an incessant stream of passers-by poured up and down between the port and the upper quarter of the city.

Our landlady was the widow of a silver-worker, and lived by the sale of filigree ornaments, cheap jewellery, combs, fans, and toys in ivory and jet. She had an only daughter named Gianetta, who served in the shop, and was simply the most beautiful woman I ever beheld. Looking back across this weary chasm of years, and bringing her image before me (as I can and do) with all the vividness of life, I am unable, even now, to detect a flaw in her beauty. I do not attempt to describe her. I do not believe there is a poet living who could find the words to do it; but I once saw a picture that was somewhat like her (not half so lovely, but still like her), and, for aught I know, that picture is still hanging where I last looked at it—upon the walls of the Louvre. It represented a woman with brown eyes and golden hair, looking over her shoulder into a circular mirror held by a bearded man in the background. In this man, as I then understood, the artist had painted his own portrait; in her, the portrait of the woman he loved. No picture that I ever saw was half so beautiful, and yet it was not worthy to be named in the same breath with Gianetta Coneglia.

You may be certain the widow's shop did not want for customers. All Genoa knew how fair a face was to be seen behind that dingy little counter; and Gianetta, flirt as she was, had more lovers than she cared to remember, even by name. Gentle and simple, rich and poor, from the red-capped sailor buying his earrings or his amulet, to the nobleman carelessly purchasing half the filigrees in the window, she treated them all alike—encouraged them, laughed at them, led them on and turned them off at her pleasure. She had no more heart than a marble statue; as Mat and I discovered by-and-by, to our bitter cost.

I cannot tell to this day how it came about, or what first led me to suspect how things were going with us both; but long before the waning of that autumn a coldness had sprung up between my friend and myself. It was nothing that could have been put into words. It was nothing that either of us could have explained or justified, to save his life. We lodged together, ate together, worked together, exactly as before; we even took our long evening's walk together, when the day's labour was ended; and except, perhaps, that we were more silent than of old, no more looker-on could have detected a shadow of change. Yet there it was, silent and subtle, widening the gulf between us every day.

It was not his fault. He was too true and gentle-hearted to have willingly brought about such a state of things between us. Neither do I believe—fiery as my nature is—that it was mine. It was all hers—hers from first to last—the sin, and the shame, and the sorrow.

If she had shown a fair and open preference

for either of us, no real harm could have come of it. I would have put any constraint upon myself, and, Heaven knows! have borne any suffering, to see Mat really happy. I know that he would have done the same, and more if he could, for me. But Gianetta cared not one sou for either. She never meant to choose between us. It gratified her vanity to divide us; it amused her to play with us. It would pass my power to tell how, by a thousand imperceptible shades of coquetry—by the lingering of a glance, the substitution of a word, the flitting of a smile—she contrived to turn our heads, and torture our hearts, and lead us on to love her. She deceived us both. She buoyed us both up with hope; she maddened us with jealousy; she crushed us with despair. For my part, when I seemed to wake to a sudden sense of the ruin that was about our path and I saw how the truest friendship that ever bound two lives together was drifting on to wreck and ruin, I asked myself whether any woman in the world was worth what Mat had been to me and I to him. But this was not often. I was readier to shut my eyes upon the truth than to face it; and so lived on, wilfully, in a dream.

Thus the autumn passed away, and winter came—the strange, treacherous Genoese winter, green with olive and ilex, brilliant with sunshine, and bitter with storm. Still, rivals at heart and friends on the surface, Mat and I lingered on in our lodging in the Vico Balba. Still Gianetta held us with her fatal wiles and her still more fatal beauty. At length there came a day when I felt I could bear the horrible misery and suspense of it no longer. The sun, I vowed, should not go down before I knew my sentence. She must choose between us. She must either take me or let me go. I was reckless. I was desperate. I was determined to know the worst, or the best. If the worst, I would at once turn my back upon Genoa, upon her, upon all the pursuits and purposes of my past life, and begin the world anew. This I told her, passionately and sternly, standing before her in the little parlour at the back of the shop, one bleak December morning.

"It's Mat whom you care for most," I said, "tell me so in one word, and I will never trouble you again. He is better worth your love. I am jealous and exacting; he is as trusting and unselfish as a woman. Speak, Gianetta; am I to bid you good-bye for ever and ever, or am I to write home to my mother in England, bidding her pray to God to bless the woman who has promised to be my wife?"

"You plead your friend's cause well," she replied, laughingly. "Matteo ought to be grateful. This is more than he ever did for you."

"Give me my answer, for pity's sake," I exclaimed, "and let me go!"

"You are free to go or stay, Signor Inglese," she replied. "I am not your jailor."

"Do you bid me leave you?"

"Beata Madre! not I."

"Will you marry me, if I stay?"

She laughed aloud—such a merry, mocking, musical laugh, like a chime of silver bells!

"You ask too much," she said.

"Only what you have led me to hope these five or six months past!"

"That is just what Matteo says. How tiresome you both are!"

"O, Gianetta," I said, passionately, "be serious for one moment! I am a rough fellow, it is true—not half good enough or clever enough for you; but I love you with my whole heart, and an Emperor could do no more."

"I am glad of it," she replied; "I do not want you to love me less."

"Then you cannot wish to make me wretched! Will you promise me?"

"I promise nothing," said she, with another burst of laughter; "except that I will not marry Matteo!"

Except that she would not marry Matteo! Only that. Not a word of hope for myself. Nothing but my friend's condemnation. I might get comfort, and selfish triumph, and some sort of base assurance out of that, if I could. And so, to my shame, I did. I grasped at the vain encouragement, and, fool that I was! let her put me off again unanswered. From that day, I gave up all effort at self-control, and let myself drift blindly on—to destruction.

At length things became so bad between Mat and myself that it seemed as if an open rupture must be at hand. We avoided each other, scarcely exchanged a dozen sentences in a day, and fell away from all our old familiar habits. At this time—I shudder to remember it!—there were moments when I felt that I hated him.

Thus, with the trouble deepening and widening between us day by day, another month or five weeks went by; and February came; and, with February, the Carnival. They said in Genoa that it was a particularly dull carnival; and so it must have been; for, save a flag or two hung out in some of the principal streets, and a sort of festa look about the women, there were no special indications of the season. It was, I think, the second day when, having been on the line all the morning, I returned to Genoa at dusk, and, to my surprise, found Mat Price on the platform. He came up to me, and laid his hand on my arm.

"You are in late," he said. "I have been waiting for you three-quarters of an hour. Shall we dine together to-day?"

Impulsive as I am, this evidence of returning good will at once called up my better feelings.

"With all my heart, Mat," I replied; "shall we go to Gozzoli's?"

"No, no," he said, hurriedly. "Some quieter place—some place where we can talk. I have something to say to you."

I noticed now that he looked pale and agitated, and an uneasy sense of apprehension stole upon me. We decided on the "Pescatore," a little out-of-the-way trattoria, down near the Molo Vecchio. There, in a dingy salon, frequented chiefly by seamen, and redolent of tobacco, we ordered our simple dinner. Mat scarcely swallowed a morsel; but, calling presently for a bottle of Sicilian wine, drank eagerly.

"Well, Mat," I said, as the last dish was placed on the table, "what news have you?"

"Bad."

"I guessed that from your face."

"Bad for you—bad for me. Gianetta."

"What of Gianetta?"

He passed his hand nervously across his lips.

"Gianetta is false—worse than false," he said, in a hoarse voice. "She values an honest man's heart just as she values a flower for her hair—wears it for a day, then throws it aside for ever. She has cruelly wronged us both."

"In what way? Good Heavens, speak out!"

"In the worst way that a woman can wrong those who love her. She has sold herself to the Marchese Loredano."

The blood rushed to my head and face in a burning torrent. I could scarcely see, and dared not trust myself to speak.

"I saw her going towards the cathedral," he went on, hurriedly. "It was about three hours ago. I thought she might be going to confession, so I hung back and followed her at a distance. When she got inside, however, she went straight to the back of the pulpit, where this man was waiting for her. You remember him—an old man who used to haunt the shop a month or two back. Well, seeing how deep in conversation they were, and how they stood close under the pulpit with their backs towards the church, I fell into a passion of anger and went straight up the aisle, intending to say or do something: I scarcely knew what; but, at all events, to draw her arm through mine, and take her home. When I came within a few feet, however, and found only a big pillar between myself and them, I paused. They could not see me, nor I them; but I could hear their voices distinctly, and—and I listened."

"Well, and you heard—"

"The terms of a shameful bargain—beauty on the one side, gold on the other; so many thousand francs a year; a villa near Naples—Pah! it makes me sick to repeat it."

And, with a shudder, he poured out another glass of wine and drank it at a draught.

"After that," he said, presently, "I made no effort to bring her away. The whole thing was so cold-blooded, so deliberate, so shameful, that I felt I had only to wipe her out of my memory, and leave her to her fate. I stole out of the cathedral, and walked about here by the sea for ever so long, trying to get my thoughts straight. Then I remembered you, Ben; and the recollection of how this wanton had come between us and broken up our lives drove me wild. So I went up to the station and waited for you. I felt you ought to know it all; and—and I thought, perhaps, that we might go back to England together."

"The Marchese Loredano!"

It was all that I could say; all that I could think. As Mat had just said of himself, I felt "like one stunned."

"There is one other thing I may as well tell you," he added, reluctantly, "if only to show you how false a woman can be. We—we were to have been married next month."

"We? Who? What do you mean?"

"I mean that we were to have been married—Gianetta and I."

A sudden storm of rage, of scorn, of incredulity, swept over me at this, and seemed to carry my senses away.

"You!" I cried. "Gianetta marry you! I don't believe it."

"I wish I had not believed it," he replied, looking up as if puzzled by my vehemence. "But she promised me; and I thought, when she promised it, she meant it."

"She told me, weeks ago, that she would never be your wife!"

His colour rose, his brow darkened; but when his answer came, it was as calm as the last.

"Indeed!" he said. "Then it is only one baseness more. She told me that she had refused you; and that was why we kept our engagement secret."

"Tell the truth, Mat Price," I said, well-nigh beside myself with suspicion. "Confess that every word of this is false! Confess that Gianetta will not listen to you, and that you are afraid I may succeed where you have failed. As perhaps I shall—as perhaps I shall, after all!"

"Are you mad?" he exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

"That I believe it's just a trick to get me away to England—that I don't credit a syllable of your story. You're a liar, and I hate you!"

He rose, and, laying one hand on the back of his chair, looked me sternly in the face.

"If you were not Benjamin Hardy," he said, deliberately, "I would thrash you within an inch of your life."

The words had no sooner passed his lips than I sprang at him. I have never been able distinctly to remember what followed. A curse—a blow—a struggle—a moment of blind fury—a cry—a confusion of tongues—a circle of strange faces. Then I see Mat lying back in the arms of a bystander; myself trembling and bewildered—the knife dropping from my grasp; blood upon the floor; blood upon my hands; blood upon his shirt. And then I hear those dreadful words:

"O, Ben, you have murdered me!"

He did not die—at least, not there and then. He was carried to the nearest hospital, and lay for some weeks between life and death. His case, they said, was difficult and dangerous. The knife had gone in just below the collar-bone, and pierced down into the lungs. He was not allowed to speak or turn—scarcely to breathe with freedom. He might not even lift his head to drink. I sat by him day and night all through that sorrowful time. I gave up my situation on the railway; I quitted my lodging in the Vicolo Balba; I tried to forget that such a woman as Gianetta Coneglia had ever drawn breath. I lived only for Mat; and he tried to live more, I believe, for my sake than his own. Thus, in the bitter silent hours of pain and penitence, when no hand but mine approached his lips or smoothed his pillow, the old friendship came back with even more than its old trust and faithfulness. He forgave me, fully and freely; and I would thankfully have given my life for him.

At length there came one bright spring morning, when, dismissed as convalescent, he tottered out through the hospital gates, leaning on my arm, and feeble as an infant. He was not cured; neither, as I then learned to my horror and anguish, was it possible that he ever could be cured. He might live, with care, for some years; but the lungs were injured beyond hope of remedy, and a strong or healthy man he could never be again. These, spoken aside to me, were the parting words of the chief physician, who advised me to take him further south without delay.

I took him to a little coast-town called Rocca, some thirty miles beyond Genoa—a sheltered lonely place along the Riviera, where the sea was even bluer than the sky, and the cliffs were green with strange tropical plants, cacti, and aloes, and Egyptian palms. Here we lodged in the house of a small tradesman; and Mat, to use his own words, "set to work at getting well in good earnest." But, alas! it was a work which no earnestness could forward. Day after day he went down to the beach, and sat for hours drinking the sea air and watching the sails that came and went in the offing. By-and-by he could go no further than the garden of the house in which we lived. A little later, and he spent his days on a couch beside the open window, waiting patiently for the end. Ay, for the end! It had come to that. He was fading fast, waning with the waning summer, and conscious that the Reaper was at hand. His whole aim now was to soften the agony of my remorse, and prepare me for what must shortly come.

"I would not live longer, if I could," he said, lying on his couch one summer evening, and looking up to the stars. "If I had my choice at this moment, I would ask to go. I should like Gianetta to know that I forgave her."

"She shall know it," I said, trembling suddenly from head to foot.

He pressed my hand.

"And you'll write to father?"

"I will."

I had drawn a little back, that he might not see the tears raining down my cheeks; but he raised himself on his elbow, and looked round.

"Don't fret, Ben," he whispered; laid his head back wearily upon the pillow—and so died.

And this was the end of it. This was the end of all that made life life to me. I buried him there, in hearing of the wash of a strange sea on a strange shore. I stayed by the grave till the priest and the bystanders were gone. I saw the earth filled in to the last sod, and the gravedigger stamp it down with his feet. Then, and not till then, I felt that I had lost him for ever—the friend I had loved, and hated, and slain. Then, and not till then, I knew that all rest, and joy, and hope were over for me. From that moment my heart hardened within me, and my life was filled with loathing. Day and night, land and sea, labour and rest, food and sleep, were alike hateful to me. It was the curse of Cain, and that my brother had par-

doned me made it lie none the lighter. Peace on earth was for me no more, and goodwill towards men was dead in my heart for ever. Remorse softens some natures; but it poisoned mine. I hated all mankind but above all mankind I hated the woman who had come between us two, and ruined both our lives.

He had bidden me seek her out, and be the messenger of his forgiveness. I had sooner have gone down to the port of Genoa and taken upon me the serge cap and shotted chain of any galley-slave at his toil in the public works; but for all that I did my best to obey him. I went back, alone and on foot. I went back, intending to say to her, "Gianetta Coneglia, he forgave you; but God never will." But she was gone. The little shop was let to a fresh occupant; and the neighbours only knew that mother and daughter had left the place quite suddenly, and that Gianetta was supposed to be under the "protection" of the Marchese Loredano. How I made inquiries here and there—how I heard that they had gone to Naples—and how, being restless and reckless of my time, I worked my passage in a French steamer, and followed her—how, having found the sumptuous villa that was now hers, I learned that she had left there some ten days and gone to Paris, where the Marchese was ambassador for the Two Sicilies—how, working my passage back again to Marseilles, and thence, in part by the river and in part by the rail, I made my way to Paris—how, day after day, I paced the streets and the parks, watched at the ambassador's gates, followed his carriage, and at last, after weeks of waiting, discovered her address—how, having written to request an interview, her servants spurned me from her door and flung my letter in my face—how, looking up at her windows, I then, instead of forgiving, solemnly cursed her with the bitterest curses my tongue could devise—and how, this done, I shook the dust of Paris from my feet, and became a wanderer upon the face of the earth, are facts which I have now no space to tell.

The next six or eight years of my life were shifting and unsettled enough. A morose and restless man, I took employment here and there, as opportunity offered, turning my hand to many things, and caring little what I earned, so long as the work was hard and the change incessant. First of all I engaged myself as chief engineer in one of the French steamers plying between Marseilles and Constantinople. At Constantinople I changed to one of the Austrian Lloyd's boats, and worked for some time to and from Alexandria, Jaffa, and those parts. After that, I fell in with a party of Mr. Layard's men at Cairo, and so went up the Nile and took a turn at the excavations of the mound of Nimroud. Then I became a working engineer on the new desert line between Alexandria and Suez; and by-and-by I worked my passage out to Bombay, and took service as an engine fitter on one of the great Indian railways. I stayed a long time in India; that is to say, I stayed nearly two years, which was a long time for me; and I might not even have left so soon, but for the war

that was declared just then with Russia. That tempted me. For I loved danger and hardship as other men love safety and ease; and as for my life, I had sooner have parted from it than kept it, any day. So I came straight back to England; I betook myself to Portsmouth, where my testimonials at once procured me the sort of berth I wanted. I went out to the Crimea in the engine-room of one of her Majesty's warsteamers.

I served with the fleet; of course, while the war lasted; and when it was over, went wandering off again, rejoicing in my liberty. This time I went to Canada, and after working on a railway then in progress near the American frontier, I presently passed over into the States; journeyed from north to south; crossed the Rocky Mountains; tried a month or two of life in the gold country; and then, being seized with a sudden, aching, unaccountable longing to revisit that solitary grave so far away on the Italian coast, I turned my face once more towards Europe.

Poor little grave! I found it rank with weeds, the cross half shattered, the inscription half effaced. It was as if no one had loved him, or remembered him. I went back to the house in which we had lodged together. The same people were still living there, and made me kindly welcome. I stayed with them for some weeks. I weeded, and planted, and trimmed the grave with my own hands, and set up a fresh cross in pure white marble. It was the first season of rest that I had known since I laid him there; and when at last I shouldered my knapsack and set forth again to battle with the world, I promised myself that, God willing, I would creep back to Rocca, when my days drew near to ending, and be buried by his side.

From hence, being, perhaps, a little less inclined than formerly for very distant parts, and willing to keep within reach of that grave, I went no further than Mantua, where I engaged myself as an engine-driver on the line, then not long completed, between that city and Venice. Somehow, although I had been trained to the working engineering, I preferred in these days to earn my bread by driving. I liked the excitement of it, the sense of power, the rush of the air, the roar of the fire, the fitting of the landscape. Above all, I enjoyed to drive a night express. The worse the weather, the better it suited with my sullen temper. For I was as hard, and harder than ever. The years had done nothing to soften me. They had only confirmed all that was blackest and bitterest in my heart.

I continued pretty faithful to the Mantua line, and had been working on it steadily for more than seven months when that which I am now about to relate took place.

It was in the month of March. The weather had been unsettled for some days past, and the nights stormy; and at one point along the line, near Ponte di Brenta, the waters had risen and swept away some seventy yards of embankment. Since this accident, the trains had all been obliged to stop at a certain spot between Padua and Ponte di Brenta, and the passengers, with their luggage, had thence to be transported in all kinds of vehicles, by a circuitous country

road, to the nearest station on the other side of the gap, where another train and engine awaited them. This, of course, caused great confusion and annoyance, put all our time-tables wrong, and subjected the public to a large amount of inconvenience. In the mean while an army of navvies was drafted to the spot, and worked day and night to repair the damage. At this time I was driving two through trains each day; namely, one from Mantua to Venice in the early morning, and a return train from Venice to Mantua in the afternoon—a tolerably full day's work, covering about one hundred and ninety miles of ground, and occupying between ten and eleven hours. I was therefore not best pleased when, on the third or fourth day after the accident, I was informed that, in addition to my regular allowance of work, I should that evening be required to drive a special train to Venice. This special train, consisting of an engine, a single carriage, and a break-van, was to leave the Mantua platform at eleven; at Padua the passengers were to alight and find post-chaises waiting to convey them to Ponte di Brenta; at Ponte di Brenta another engine, carriage, and break-van were to be in readiness. I was charged to accompany them throughout.

"Corpo di Bacco," said the clerk who gave me my orders, "you need not look so black, man. You are certain of a handsome gratuity. Do you know who goes with you?"

"Not I."

"Not you, indeed! Why, it's the Duca Loredano, the Neapolitan ambassador."

"Loredano!" I stammered. "What Loredano? There was a Marchese——"

"Certo. He was the Marchese Loredano some years ago; but he has come into his dukedom since then."

"He must be a very old man by this time."

"Yes, he is old; but what of that? He is as hale, and bright, and stately as ever. You have seen him before?"

"Yes," I said, turning away; "I have seen him—years ago."

"You have heard of his marriage?"

I shook my head.

The clerk chuckled, rubbed his hands, and shrugged his shoulders.

"An extraordinary affair," he said. "Made a tremendous esclandre at the time. He married his mistress—quite a common, vulgar girl—a Genoese—very handsome; but not received, of course. Nobody visits her."

"Married her!" I exclaimed. "Impossible."

"True, I assure you."

I put my hand to my head. I felt as if I had had a fall or a blow.

"Does she—does she go to-night?" I faltered.

"O dear, yes—goes everywhere with him—never lets him out of her sight. You'll see her—la bella Duchessa!"

With this my informant laughed, and rubbed his hands again, and went back to his office.

The day went by, I scarcely know how, except that my whole soul was in a tumult of rage and bitterness. I returned from my afternoon's work about 7.25, and at 10.30 I was

once again at the station. I had examined the engine; given instructions to the Fochista, or stoker, about the fire; seen to the supply of oil; and got all in readiness, when, just as I was about to compare my watch with the clock in the ticket-office, a hand was laid upon my arm, and a voice in my ear said:

"Are you the engine-driver who is going on with this special train?"

I had never seen the speaker before. He was a small, dark man, muffled up about the throat, with blue glasses, a large black beard, and his hat drawn low upon his eyes.

"You are a poor man, I suppose," he said, in a quick, eager whisper, "and, like other poor men, would not object to be better off. Would you like to earn a couple of thousand florins?"

"In what way?"

"Hush! You are to stop at Padua, are you not, and to go on again at Ponte di Brenta?"

I nodded.

"Suppose you did nothing of the kind. Suppose, instead of turning off the steam, you jump off the engine, and let the train run on?"

"Impossible. There are seventy yards of embankment gone, and——"

"Basta! I know that. Save yourself, and let the train run on. It would be nothing but an accident."

I turned hot and cold; I trembled; my heart beat fast, and my breath failed.

"Why do you tempt me?" I faltered.

"For Italy's sake," he whispered; "for liberty's sake. I know you are no Italian; but, for all that, you may be a friend. This Loredano is one of his country's bitterest enemies. Stay, here are the two thousand florins."

I thrust his hand back fiercely.

"No—no," I said. "No blood-money. If I do it, I do it neither for Italy nor for money; but for vengeance."

"For vengeance!" he repeated.

At this moment the signal was given for backing up to the platform. I sprang to my place upon the engine without another word. When I again looked towards the spot where he had been standing, the stranger was gone.

I saw them take their places—Duke and Duchess, secretary and priest, valet and maid. I saw the station-master bow them into the carriage, and stand, bareheaded, beside the door. I could not distinguish their faces; the platform was too dusk, and the glare from the engine fire too strong; but I recognised her stately figure, and the poise of her head. Had I not been told who she was, I should have known her by those traits alone. Then the guard's whistle shrilled out, and the station-master made his last bow; I turned the steam on; and we started.

My blood was on fire. I no longer trembled or hesitated. I felt as if every nerve was iron, and every pulse instinct with deadly purpose. She was in my power, and I would be revenged. She should die—she, for whom I had stained

my soul with my friend's blood! She should die, in the plenitude of her wealth and her beauty, and no power upon earth should save her!

The stations flew past. I put on more steam; I bade the fireman heap in the coke, and stir the blazing mass. I would have outstripped the wind, had it been possible. Faster and faster—hedges and trees, bridges and stations, flashing past—villages no sooner seen than gone—telegraph wires twisting, and dipping, and twining themselves in one, with the awful swiftness of our pace! Faster and faster, till the fireman at my side looks white and scared, and refuses to add more fuel to the furnace. Faster and faster, till the wind rushes in our faces and drives the breath back upon our lips.

I would have scorned to save myself. I meant to die with the rest. Mad as I was—and I believe from my very soul that I was utterly mad for the time—I felt a passing pang of pity for the old man and his suite. I would have spared the poor fellow at my side, too, if I could; but the pace at which we were going made escape impossible.

Vicenza was passed—a mere confused vision of lights. Pojana flew by. At Padua, but nine miles distant, our passengers were to alight. I saw the fireman's face turned upon me in remonstrance; I saw his lips move, though I could not hear a word; I saw his expression change suddenly from remonstrance to a deadly terror, and then—merciful Heaven! then, for the first time, I saw that he and I were no longer alone upon the engine.

There was a third man—a third man standing on my right hand, as the fireman was standing on my left—a tall, stalwart man, with short curling hair, and a flat Scotch cap upon his head. As I fell back in the first shock of surprise, he stepped nearer; took my place at the engine, and turned the steam off. I opened my lips to speak to him; he turned his head slowly, and looked me in the face.

Matthew Price!

I uttered one long wild cry, flung my arms wildly up above my head, and fell as if I had been smitten with an axe.

I am prepared for the objections that may be made to my story. I expect, as a matter of course, to be told that this was an optical illusion, or that I was suffering from pressure on the brain, or even that I laboured under an attack of temporary insanity. I have heard all these arguments before, and, if I may be forgiven for saying so, I have no desire to hear them again. My own mind has been made up upon this subject for many a year. All that I can say—all that I *know* is—that Matthew Price came back from the dead to save my soul and the lives of those whom I, in my guilty rage, would have hurried to destruction. I believe this as I believe in the mercy of Heaven and the forgiveness of repentant sinners.

THE END OF THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1866.

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